

Elbow Valley

A short 30-minute drive from Calgary, the picnic areas and campgrounds of the Elbow Valley make a perfect day-outing or weekend oasis, and the trails are a magnet few visitors can resist. Hundreds of kilometres of trails await to challenge the hiker, mountain biker, rider, and cross-country skier. From a gentle meander through the forest to a gruelling ridge-top scramble, the Elbow Valley trails connect with the Sheep, Sibbald, and Kananaskis Valleys, offering something for everyone.

To enhance your enjoyment of the scenery and to ensure it's just as beautiful the next time you visit, please keep the following in mind:

- Stay on trails; do not take shortcuts on switchbacks.
- Keep pets on a leash at all times.
- Do not pick flowers or remove natural objects.
- Pack out what you pack in, as well as any additional litter you may find.
- Wash and relieve yourself at least 60 metres from a water source when facilities are not available.
- Do not feed any wild animals.
- Use constructed firepits or cook on your portable stove when these facilities are not provided.

Trails For Hikers

TRAIL	ACCESS	REMARKS
BEAVER FLATS INTERPRETIVE 1.5 km one way	Beaver Lodge picnic area/Beaver Flats Campground	A flat trail running alongside a series of active beaver ponds with an abandoned beaver lodge next to the trail. Signs describe beaver life.
ELBOW FALLS INTERPRETIVE 1 km return	Elbow Falls picnic area	A short, paved loop that takes you to the viewpoints over Elbow Falls. The upper (left-hand) part of the loop is wheelchair accessible. Signs describe water erosion and management.
FULLERTON LOOP 7 km return 213 m/692 ft	Allen Bill Pond day use area	You have a choice of getting a workout climbing the ridge edge, or taking the more gradual route up the valley behind. On top of the ridge, there are views to Moose Mountain, west down the valley and south across the Elbow River.
LITTLE ELBOW INTERPRETIVE 2.5 km one way	Forgetmenot Pond picnic area, Little Elbow picnic area	From Forgetmenot Pond, the trail takes strollers through the picnic area to the Little Elbow River, and follows upstream to the end of Little Elbow Campground. Signs describe river ecology.
MCLEAN CREEK INTERPRETIVE 1.2 km return	McLean Creek amphitheatre	A short stroll through pine and spruce forest, wetlands and meadows.
NIHAHI RIDGE 2.5 km one way 390 m/1,280 ft	Little Elbow Trail, 0.5 km west of campground	Switchbacks up to the shoulder of Nihahi Ridge, a quick dive across the open saddle and then straight up the ridge edge. Great views east down the Elbow River Valley and west up the Little Elbow River Valley.
PADDY'S FLAT INTERPRETIVE 2.2 km return	Paddy's Flat Campground	This trail runs from the campground through mixed woods down to the river and back up to the campground. Riverview Trail is accessed off the west end of the interpretive trail. Brochure describes ecology of Elbow River Valley.
TOMBSTONE LAKES 2 km one way 180 m/590 ft	Little Elbow Trail, Tombstone backcountry campground	From the campground, the trail follows up Tombstone Creek to the first of the lakes nestled in the arms of Tombstone Mountain. Access to the upper lake is along the north side of the lower lake.

Trail For Mountain Bikers & Hikers

TRAIL	ACCESS	REMARKS
RIVERVIEW 4 km one way 102 m/300 ft	Paddy's Flat Loop Trail, Elbow Valley across from Paddy's Flat Campground turnoff or west of Moose Mountain Road.	This trail meanders through aspen and mixed woods up the escarpment above the Elbow River. Aptly named, this trail has great views of the river canyon. It is also a good wildflower trail.

Trails For Hikers, Mountain Bikers & Horseback Riders

TRAIL	ACCESS	REMARKS
BIG ELBOW 26.5 km one way 350 m/1,150 ft	Little Elbow Recreation Area	This is the east half of the well-known Elbow Loop. The old fireroad follows the Elbow River upstream past Big Elbow backcountry campground to Tombstone backcountry campground and trail junctions beyond. Views of Threepoint and Cougar Mountains, Mounts Glasgow and Cornwall, and Banded Peak.

Trails For Hikers, Mountain Bikers & Horseback Riders

TRAIL	ACCESS	REMARKS
DIAMOND T LOOP 5 km return 120 m/390 ft	Station Flats staging area	Uphill through pine woods, with a short detour to a foothills lookout.
FORD CREEK 18 km one way 590 m/1,935 ft	Little Elbow Recreation Area	A mountain biking and equestrian trail, this trail follows the eastern foot of Nihahi Ridge.
FORD KNOLL 4 km return 235 m/770 ft	Forgetmenot Pond picnic area	Climb through the trees on the north side of the loop and descend through open meadows with views down the Elbow River valley
ELBOW VALLEY 10 km one way 365 m/1,200 ft	Station Flats staging area, Paddy's Flat Campground, Elbow River Boat Launch, Elbow Falls, Powderface picnic areas	Roughly paralleling the highway, the trail winds up and down through forests and meadows. It forms popular loops with Sulphur Springs Trail or Riverview Trail. A ford across Canyon Creek is required.
LITTLE ELBOW 23 km one way 400 m/1,310 ft	Little Elbow Recreation Area	Half of the popular Elbow Loop, the Little Elbow Trail is an old fireroad that follows west and south along the Little Elbow River, over Tombstone Pass to Tombstone backcountry campground. Views of Mounts Romulus, Remus, Glasgow & Tombstone.
MOOSE MOUNTAIN 7.3 km one way 470 m/1540 ft	End of Moose Mt. Road	An old fireroad that follows Moose Ridge and switchbacks up Moose Dome. The final kilometre to the lookout is a steep, single-track trail on loose rock.
NIHAHI CREEK 2.4 km one way 240 m/790 ft	Little Elbow Trail	Follow beside and above the creek behind Nihahi Ridge. When the packed-dirt trail exits onto the dry upper creek bed, a sharp left downstream leads hikers to the Nihahi Creek Canyon with its water-polished rock walls. Hikers can follow the canyon for a kilometre before having to retrace steps.
POWDERFACE CREEK 6.2 km one way 510 m/1,673 ft	Powderface staging area	This trail follows Powderface Creek up its narrow valley to the Three-trail Pass. The eastern half of the trail is gently rolling, but steeper, rockier terrain is encountered further west.
POWDERFACE RIDGE 7 km one way 640 m/2,100 ft	End of Highway #66 or Three-trail Pass	A strenuous climb from either end, with great views and flower-filled meadows at the top.
PRAIRIE CREEK 9.2 km one way 180 m/590 ft	Beaver Lodge parking lot, Powderface staging area or Powderface Road	The first two kilometres of this trail climb the edge of a cool, shaded canyon. Once over the promontory over the creek, the trail drops down and follows a series of beaver ponds and wide meadows. This trail can be muddy.
PRAIRIE LINK 3 km one way 85 m/280 ft	Powderface Creek or Prairie Creek Trails	This is a cut-off between Powderface Creek and Prairie Creek Trails, shortening a 24 kilometre loop to 11. The trail climbs through forest over the saddle between the two trails.
SULPHUR SPRINGS 5.2 km one way 215 m/705 ft	Elbow Valley Trail, Moose Mountain Road	The west end of the trail climbs along the escarpment over Canyon Creek through aspen stands, then the trail winds through spruce forest down to the east junction with Elbow Valley Trail.

Trails For Hikers, Mountain Bikers & Horseback Riders

TRAIL	ACCESS	REMARKS
THREEPOINT MOUNTAIN 10 km one way 460 m/1,510 ft	Big Elbow Trail	After fording the Elbow River, this trail climbs steeply over the pass between Threepoint and Forgetmenot mountains, and down to Threepoint backcountry campground.
TOM SNOW 30 km one way 210 m/700 ft	Station Flats staging area, Dawson Campground	The main connector trail between the Elbow River Valley and Sibbald Creek Valley, this trail winds through foothills to the east and north around Moose Mountain. Used mainly for mountain biking and equestrian.
TRAIL CREEK 2.5 km one way 275 m/900 ft	Ford Creek Trail, Powderface Road, Three-trail Pass	A connector between Ford Creek Trail, the gravel road and the Powderface Trails (creek and ridge). East of the highway, it climbs steadily through forest to the Three-trail Pass, offering views of Nihahi and Compression Ridges to the west.
WILDHORSE 16 km one way 357 m/1,170 ft	Little Elbow Recreation Area, Cobble Flats picnic area	Access to this trail requires fording the Elbow River. From the ford at Big Elbow, the trail follows around the north side of Forgetmenot Ridge, then up the valley to the east. Mountain bikers link this trail with the Quirk Creek fireroad through the off-highway vehicle zone.

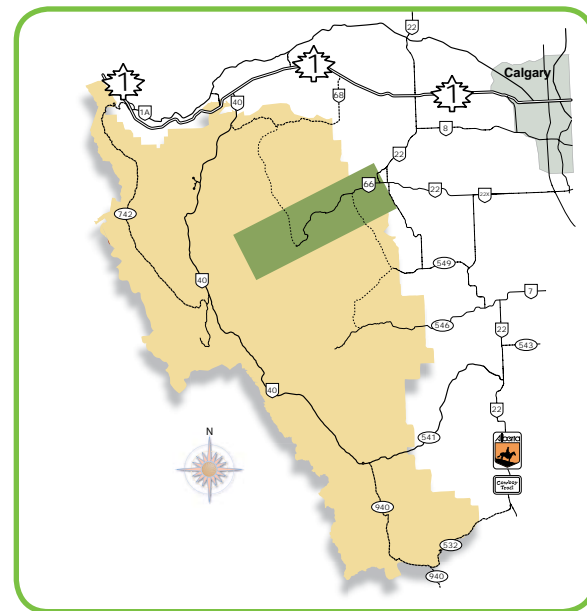


Ford Creek Trail

West Bragg Creek Cross-Country Ski Trails

TRAIL	REMARKS
CRYSTAL LINE	This trail makes for easy skiing with only one intermediate hill. Watch for downhill skiers at the west junction of Sundog and Crystal Line Trails.
ELBOW TRAIL	This trail is generally of intermediate level with one steep hill at the north end. The south trailhead is located at the east end of Allen Bill Pond picnic area, on the south side of Elbow Falls Trail (Hwy. #66).
HOSTEL LOOP	An excellent short intermediate trail with good snow conditions, this route should be skied clockwise. Although there are few vistas, the trail traverses a wide range of aspen, pine, and spruce woods.
MOOSE LOOP	Best skied counter-clockwise, this trail offers easy and scenic skiing with a fast hill at the north end. Watch for wet snow over frozen stream crossings along the southern portion of the route.
SUNDOG TRAIL	When skied clockwise this is generally an easy trail with a few steep sections where beginners may have to side-step. Watch for downhill skiers at the west junction of Sundog and Crystal Line Trails.
TELEPHONE TRAIL	Best skied clockwise, this trail is generally of intermediate level with a few fast sections at the north end. Due to the great distance of this loop only strong skiers should attempt the full distance. Warm or windy weather may result in snow loss on the open areas between the Moose Loop junctions.

The way to the Elbow Valley



For More Information

Elbow Valley Visitor Information Centre (403) 949-4261
Barrier Lake Visitor Information Centre. . . . (403) 673-3985

Kananaskis Country Campgrounds (403) 949-3132
Backcountry camping permits. (403) 678-3136
Service Alberta Call Centre (toll free in Alberta) 310-0000
www.Kananaskis-Country.ca

Emergency

If you require Fire, Ambulance, Police or Mountain Rescue assistance, immediately call 9-1-1. Tell the operator you have an emergency in Kananaskis Country.



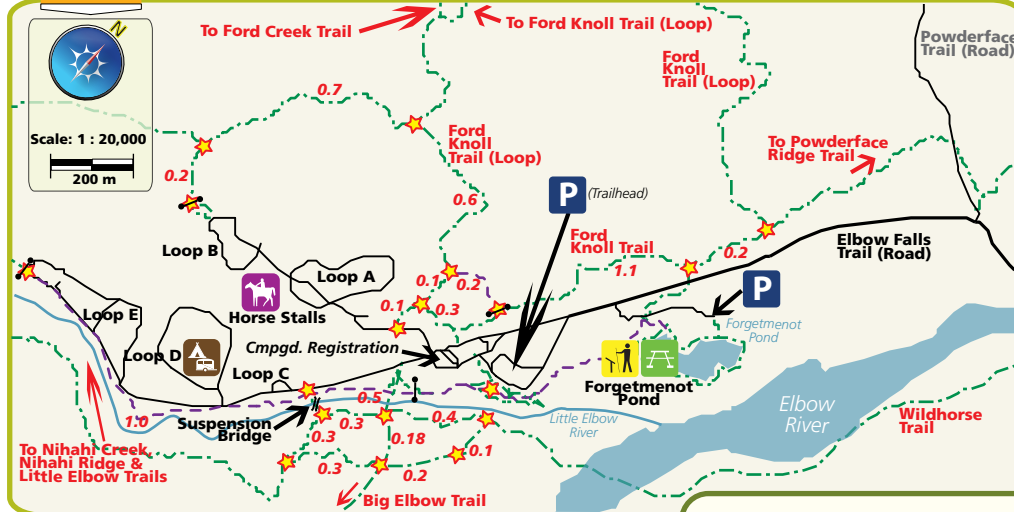
Little Elbow Recreation Area

Hiking the upper reaches of the Elbow River — Photo Eric Kuhn

Elbow Valley Summer Trails (includes west Bragg Creek Cross-Country Ski Trails)



Map #3 *Little Elbow Recreation Area*



Map #2 *Elbow Loop Trails*



Map #1 *Elbow Valley Trails*

