

Draft Cypress Hills Provincial Park Mountain Biking Trail Design Plan and Equestrian & Cross-Country Ski Trail Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the Cypress Hills Provincial Park Trail Design Plan and the Equestrian & Cross-Country Ski Trail Plan?

The Cypress Hills Provincial Park Trail Design Plan and the Equestrian & Cross-Country Ski Trail Plan (the plans) are guiding documents to manage and develop current and future trails in the park. Cypress Hills Provincial Park has a large community of trail users who partake in numerous trail activities and these plans set out the vision, goals, and objectives to provide high quality and sustainable trails for current and future generations.

2. Where is the park located and what is the project scope within the park?

The 205km² park is located in the south-east corner of Alberta, 70 km south-east of the city of Medicine Hat and 360 km south-east of Calgary. The park's eastern boundary lies along the western boundary of Saskatchewan.

Recreational trails are an important component of the visitor experience in the park. A well designed and sustainable mountain biking, equestrian and cross-country ski trail system will allow visitors to explore all reaches of the park. Amenities, such as staging areas, huts, equestrian campgrounds and a bike skills area will be developed to support the visitor experience.

3. Why does the park need two separate trail plans?

As a result of funding and resource availability, two separate trail plans were prepared based on the type of activity. Fortunately, the completion of both draft plans has occurred in a similar timeframe, allowing for the consultation process to be completed concurrently. Subsequent to releasing the final plans, an integrated trail database and map will be prepared that will include the existing and future trails. Trails will be identified based on the purpose of each specific trail (e.g., multi-use, hiking, biking, equestrian or cross-country skiing). Wherever feasible, the implementation of the two trail plans will be coordinated.

4. What is the trails management vision for the park and what are the key objectives of the plan?

The intent of both plans is to develop the park into a regional destination for mountain biking, equestrian, and cross-country skiing. Both plans describe a phased-in approach for developing a comprehensive trail system and associate amenities that will increase the attractiveness of the park to user groups. Some of key elements that are required to make the park a regional destination include:

- Trails that have varying level of difficulty and duration for each type of activity
- Sustainable and well-maintained trails
- Partnerships with local trail and recreation groups
- Central hubs for each activity, creating a sense of community
- Amenities to support an excellent experience (e.g., camping, staging areas, huts, skills parks, warm-up shelters)
- Supporting businesses (rentals, restaurants, fixed roof accommodation, transportation to the site)

5. What are the key outcomes of the trail plans?

The key outcomes for the trails plans include:

- Establish a direction for future trail development and identify a trail system that meets the overall vision and intent for the park
- Prioritization of improvements for new and existing trails amenities
- Enhancement and formalization of partnerships with recreational user groups to maintain and fund improvements and establishment of a trail advisory committee to advise on the implementation of both plans
- Ensuring that the improvements to existing trails and new trails are implemented in a way that enhances recreational opportunities and the associated user experience while maintaining and protecting the ecological and historical resources

6. How were the draft trails plans developed?

Both trail planning process were led by Alberta Parks staff with support from a consulting team. During the development of the plans the team worked closely with stakeholder groups, the public and internal staff. Input was collect via targeted stakeholder meetings, public information collection and staff workshops. All of the input was carefully considered and is reflected in the proposed trail networks and amenities and direction contained in the draft plans. Collaboration with stakeholders and the public will continue through this consultation period and through to the implementation of the plans.

7. How would the new trails plan change activities on the land base?

The implementation of these trail plans will increase the opportunities for trail-based recreational activities in the park. The enhanced trail system will build upon the existing visitor experience by increasing the number, length and diversity of trails. Trails will also be designed to attract users with varying levels of experience (beginner to expert) with a variety of interests, including hiking, biking, equestrian and cross-country skiing. Changes could also include decommissioning portions of existing trails that have proven to be problematic or that no longer contribute to the key outcomes identified within the plans.

8. How can I comment on the draft trails plans for the park?

Alberta Parks encourages feedback on this project. Send in your comments, suggestions and concerns by emailing or mailing in your feedback to the appropriate address outlined below. Feedback will be collected until January 27, 2018.

By Email: ABParks.PlanComments@gov.ab.ca

By Mail:

Alberta Environment and Parks
 South Region Office
 Cypress Hills Provincial Park Draft Trail Plans
 4th fl. Administration Building
 909 - 3 Avenue North
 Lethbridge, AB T1H 0H5

9. What happens after the consultation period ends?

Once the 60-day comment period is complete, all comments will be carefully reviewed and considered. Once approved, the final Trail Design Plan and the Equestrian & Cross-Country Ski Trail Plan will be posted on www.albertaparks.ca/consult.

10. Who can I contact for further information on this proposal?

By Phone: South Region Office 403-388-1114

By Email: ABParks.PlanComments@gov.ab.ca