

# Welcome to Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area

## Park Description

Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area rises from the hot, dry Thompson valleys through three distinct grassland communities to the forested hills above. Nowhere else in western North America do these grassland communities exist in such close proximity. Grasslands, forests, lakes, ponds, wetlands, riparian areas, estuarine areas, rocky slopes, and cliffs all provide habitat to a wide variety of flora and fauna.

The 15,000-hectare area plays an important conservation role, hosting two Ecological Reserves set aside for their research and educational significance. McQueen Creek in the northeast protects a sample of the middle grassland community, while Tranquille in the west protects a small area of ponderosa pine and bunchgrass.

Spring comes early to the lower hot, dry slopes, while the upper grasslands and forests are not in full bloom until early June. The riparian areas are alive with singing and nesting birds from May to July. Beyond the grasslands, ancient ponderosa pines in a sea of bluebunch wheatgrass give way to groves of trembling aspen and an open Douglas-fir forest.

The dry climate with mild winters and warm summers enables the area to support numerous species. Ground-nesting birds inhabit the grasslands, relying on the availability of good cover for safety and abundant insects for food. California bighorn sheep and large numbers of mule deer enjoy access to open forested areas with plentiful shrubs and low snowfall in winter.



## Getting There

Access is only by the roads shown on the map; motor vehicles are prohibited on all other trails. Roads might not be passable by two-wheel drive low clearance vehicles, and weather conditions can dramatically alter driving conditions. Parking opportunities are limited on all roads. Pull well off the roadway and lock your vehicle.

**A:** Lac du Bois Road in the east goes through the full sweep of the grasslands.

**B:** In the west, Tranquille-Criss Creek Forest Service Road (also known as Red Lake Road) rises steeply to the Dewdrop Range and the deep canyon of Tranquille Valley.

Two other roads give vehicle access to the area, each leading into a different type of scenery. Long Lake Road winds its way through the grasslands to the forests past rolling hills and small ponds. It is a narrow, dirt track, steep in places; closed during winter and spring break-up or during adverse conditions that would affect the stability of the road. Dairy Creek Road is logging road that runs through Douglas fir forest and beside deeply entrenched streams.

The road lying to the west of Wheeler Mountain is deeply rutted and partly washed out in places. It is not recommended for public use.

## Enjoy Your Stay

Park regulations protect the natural state of the park and ensure a quality experience for all visitors.

- Use only established trails to avoid damaging fragile grasslands and spreading unwanted weeds.
- Take all garbage home - if you pack it in, pack it out.
- Leave dead trees where they are as they are critical to many species of wildlife.
- While in the protected area the use of ATVs and 4-wheel drives is restricted to Long Lake Road only. There is a designated ATV area just to the south of the protected area boundary.
- If you see any inappropriate or prohibited activities please contact BC Parks.

## Hiking Trails

Recreation activities in the area need to be compatible with the fragile grassland and dry forest communities. Please use only established trails and tread lightly wherever you go.

**Mara Trail** - This interpretive 3.5 km loop trail overlooks Kamloops Lake and the Thompson River. Flora includes cactus, sagebrush, pine trees, and assorted grasses, all lower grasslands plants. The trail is rated moderately difficult and is best hiked counter-clockwise. Thanks are due to the Kamloops and District Fish and Game Club for trail construction.

**Cinnamon Ridge Trail** - A 4.25 km semi-loop/linear trail that ascends up a ridge and partway up Mara Hill, featuring hoodoos, desert plants and little grassland. The trail is rated moderate to difficult, due to the hills.

**Dewdrop Trail** - This 5.7 km linear trail offers spectacular views of Kamloops Lake and the valley below, as well as the possibility of encountering the resident California Bighorn Sheep. The trail is moderately difficult.

**Grasslands Community Trail** - A 13 km, multi-use linear trail for hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders and trail runners that traverses all three grassland types. Motorized sports are prohibited. This trail is moderate to difficult, and although there are signs along the way, a good map of the area is strongly recommended. This trail provides access to Deep Lake, where you can fish for rainbow and brook trout. A pit toilet is located partway along the trail.

## Private and Conservation Lands

In 2008 the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) purchased 2,342 acres (948 hectares) of private land within and around the park. These lands contain some of the most intact native grassland in B.C. and support many species at risk. The lands remain private, and the owner's permission must be obtained before entering these properties. Other privately owned parcels of land exist within the protected area, which also require prior permission for access.

## Things to Do

-  See Hiking Trails section for details on easy strolls in the grasslands to challenging hikes in the hills.
-  Deep Lake has rainbow and brook trout. An appropriate license is required for angling.
-  There are many opportunities to see wildlife, especially birds near the lakes and ponds and California bighorn sheep and mule deer at the Dewdrop cliffs.
-  Snowshoeing is one way to enjoy the area in winter, however there are no designated or maintained trails.
-  There is a very rustic site designated for camping at Watching Creek, with very limited facilities. Two Ministry of Forests recreation sites are located just north of the protected area, at Isobel Lake and Pass Lake.
-  Biking is a good way to enjoy the diverse beauty of the area. Stay on established trails to avoid damaging fragile grasslands.

## Safety

- Wood ticks are abundant in the grasslands in spring.
- Bring your own drinking water, as potable water is not available in the protected area.
- Although it is very warm in the valley, it can be much cooler higher up in the hills. Carry appropriate clothing and rain gear.
- Report forest fires to 1-800-663-5555.

## Contact Information

BC Parks Kamloops office  
Phone: 1-250-371-6200

Visit [www.bcparks.ca](http://www.bcparks.ca) for more information!



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## Wildlife

Grasslands represent less than one per cent of B.C.'s land base, but provide habitat for 30 per cent of the province's species at risk. BC Parks is looking to the local community and other users for support in managing this fragile area.

The diverse habitats in Lac du Bois provide for a variety of animal life, including California bighorn sheep, white tail and mule deer, moose, rattlesnake, ground-nesting birds, flammulated owls, black bear, burrowing owls, and waterfowl.

### Species at Risk:

**Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse** inhabit the grasslands for much of the year, retreating to aspen groves and riparian areas for the winter. Though they once ranged through much of Washington and B.C., the pale, speckled brown grouse with the pointed tail is now a vulnerable species.

**Western Rattlesnakes, Racers and Gopher snakes** live in the grasslands and open forests, and prefer dry, rocky habitats but are sometimes found in meadows and pond edges. Though many people fear them, snakes have an important role in the ecosystem. Help in their conservation by watching for and avoiding snakes crossing or basking on roadways and by not disturbing rock or debris piles - snakes often use them for shelter.

**Long-billed Curlews** are the largest sandpiper in the world, roughly the size of a mallard. They use the grasslands to breed and nest, on the ground on the dry hilltops. Please observe breeding pairs from a distance, as they might abandon their offspring if they feel threatened. Report any nests you see to BC Parks.



## Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area

### Park Map and Information Guide

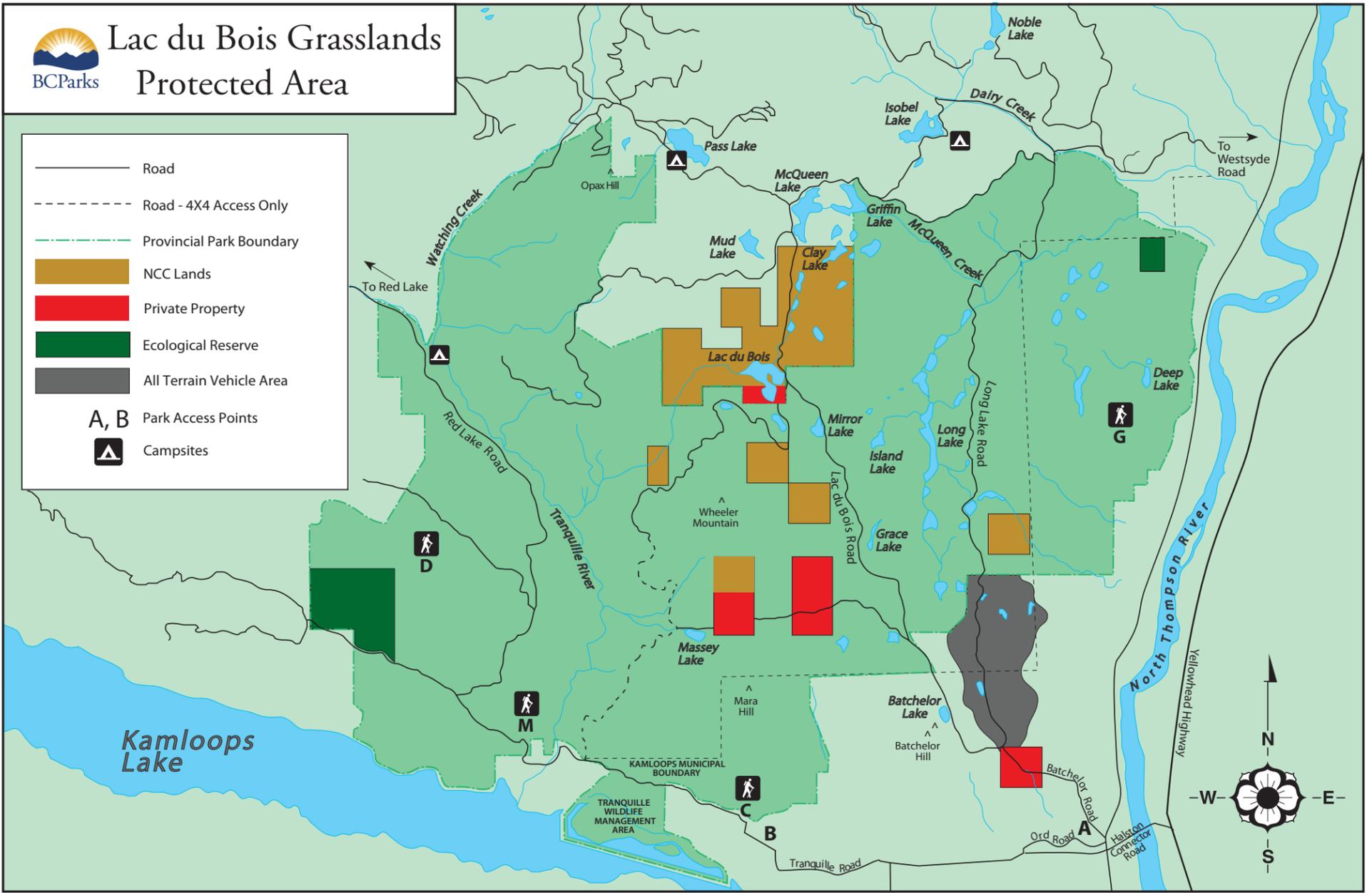


BC Parks



# Lac du Bois Grasslands Protected Area

- Road
- - - Road - 4X4 Access Only
- - - Provincial Park Boundary
- NCC Lands
- Private Property
- Ecological Reserve
- All Terrain Vehicle Area
- A, B Park Access Points
- ▲ Campsites



Cinnamon Ridge Trail Area



Mara Trail Area



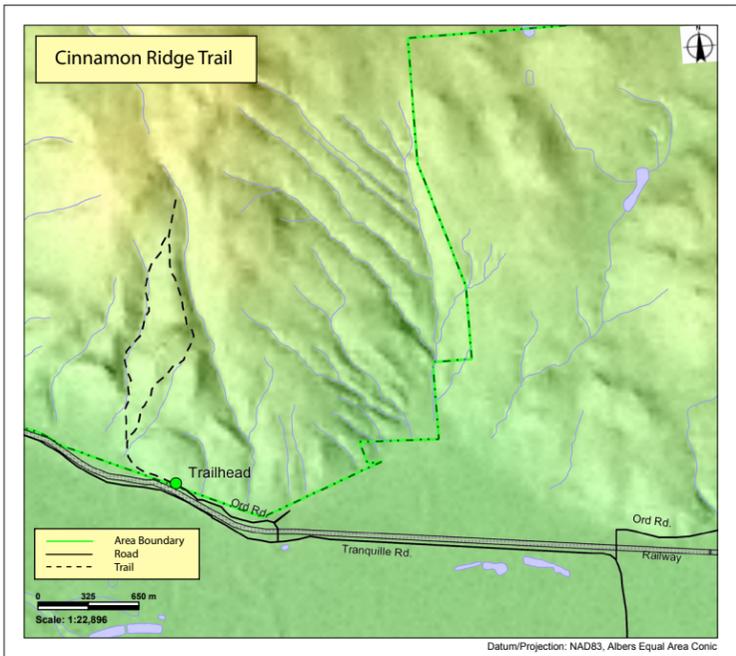
Dewdrop Trail Area



Grasslands Community Trail Area



## Trail Maps



**CAUTION:** Maps obtained using this site are not designed to assist in navigation. These maps may be generalized and may not reflect current condition. Uncharted hazards may exist. **DO NOT USE THESE MAPS FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES.**

