

Meadow Lake Provincial Park Boreal Trail Guide

1-9 : BT 1- BT9; H:Humphrey Tower

W:Wolf Bay Campsite; R:River Bend Campsite

C:Chalet Camp; P:Park Admin Office



The Boreal Trail

The Boreal Trail is a multi-use trail that spans from the Cold River Primitive Campground on the west side to the Dorintosh Administration Office on the east side of the Meadow Lake Provincial Park. The trail was designed for hiking and backpacking. If you choose to try out the trail on your mountain bike, be extra cautious, as the trail may have some difficult sections.

This trail system links several of our existing campgrounds. Water, showers, and camping are available at some of these campgrounds. Parking is available in designated areas at the campgrounds and throughout the park, which allows visitors to leave their vehicles for later pickup.

There are signs along the highways where the trail enters or returns to the back country and at points where the trail will intersect with other trails and at each back country campsite. Hikers are to watch for yellow carsonite markers, orange topped flagging stakes and orange flagging tape along the trail. The carsonite markers will have the Boreal Trail emblem on them.



Meadow Lake Provincial Park

The Boreal Trail is located within Meadow Lake Provincial Park in northwestern Saskatchewan. Some of Mother Nature's best work is on display in the park. Lush boreal forest, laced with sparkling clean lakes and the winding Waterhen River makes this natural environment park a vacation dream. The park covers an area of almost sixteen hundred square kilometers and is roughly one hundred and thirteen kilometers in length and up to thirty two kilometers wide.

The park was established in 1959 and since that time has seen considerable development as a public recreation area. There are twelve campgrounds with over seven hundred and fifty campsites and twenty five lakes that provide excellent fishing opportunities. The Meadow Lake Provincial Park is a special place to enjoy a back country experience. Here are a few tips to make your trip more enjoyable:

- Your safety is your own responsibility. Please remember that all outdoor activities involve some degree of risk.
- Water borne parasites are spread by humans and some domestic and wild animals. These parasites can be in any surface water. Boiling, filtering, or treating water is recommended.
- Remember wildlife is wild and can be dangerous.
- Consider leaving your dog at home. Wild animals see dogs as either prey or predator. Dogs must be leashed at all times.

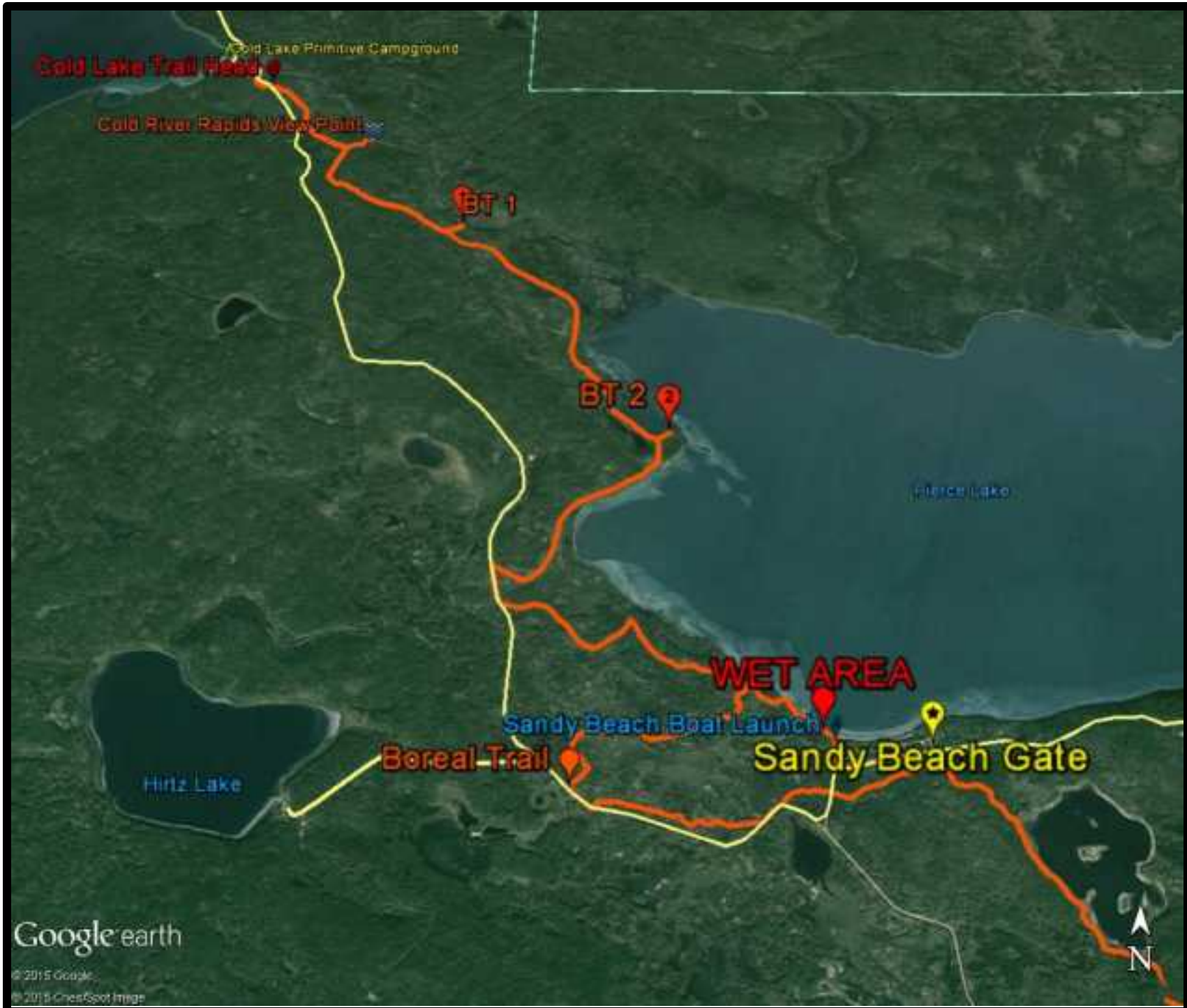
Hikers camping along the trail must register by completing a Back Country registration form, which can be downloaded at www.tourismsaskatchewan.com. The form can be completed and emailed directly to the park or print it off and bring it with you if you plan on registering at one of the park administration offices. For safety reasons, registration is required for day hikes as well. Designated back country sites are marked as BT1, BT 2, etc. Payment for these campsites must be made at the point of registration. The fee is eleven dollars per tent per night. If for some reason you cannot make it to one of the designated sites, you can camp along the trail, however no open fires are allowed. A back packing stove must be used. All trash and garbage must be hauled out. Refer to the Leave No Trace principles on the back cover for proper disposal of human waste.

Cold River to Sandy Beach Campground

The west side trailhead is located approximately eight hundred meters south of the Cold River campground on highway 919. This first section of trail parallels the road for a short distance and then goes through a mixed wood forest alongside the Cold River. There are several faint trails off of the main trail that have access to the Cold River. Be careful going down the bank as the incline is very steep.

The first back country site (BT 1) is located on a high cliff overlooking the Cold River and is approximately 5.1 km from the trailhead. The second back country site (BT 2) is 4.1 km from BT1 and is located in a sheltered bay on Pierce Lake.

At each back country site there is a bear proof food locker. pit toilet and barbecue.



The pit toilets are located at least 60-70 meters from the barbecue and bear proof food-lockers. This will provide some privacy, but it is also common practice in the back country to separate your sleeping areas from your "kitchen" and the location where you dispose of waste. You are expected to bring your own toilet paper.



The food lockers at each back country campsite are to store food items and garbage. These food lockers will prevent bears and other wildlife accessing your consumable goods. Be sure to take your garbage with you when you leave the campsite. If a previous hiker has left items in the food-locker please consider packing them out or advise park staff of the location, when you de-register after your trip.



If you are not able to make it to one of the designated sites camping along the trail, your food and garbage needs to be securely stored away from your sleeping area. It is highly recommended enough rope to hang the food items so that they are not accessible by bears. Ideally, the items should be four to five meters off the ground and away from the trunk of the tree. There are no open fires allowed other than in the supplied barbecues. If there is a fire ban in place then all fires are prohibited. Gather dead and down wood for your fire.



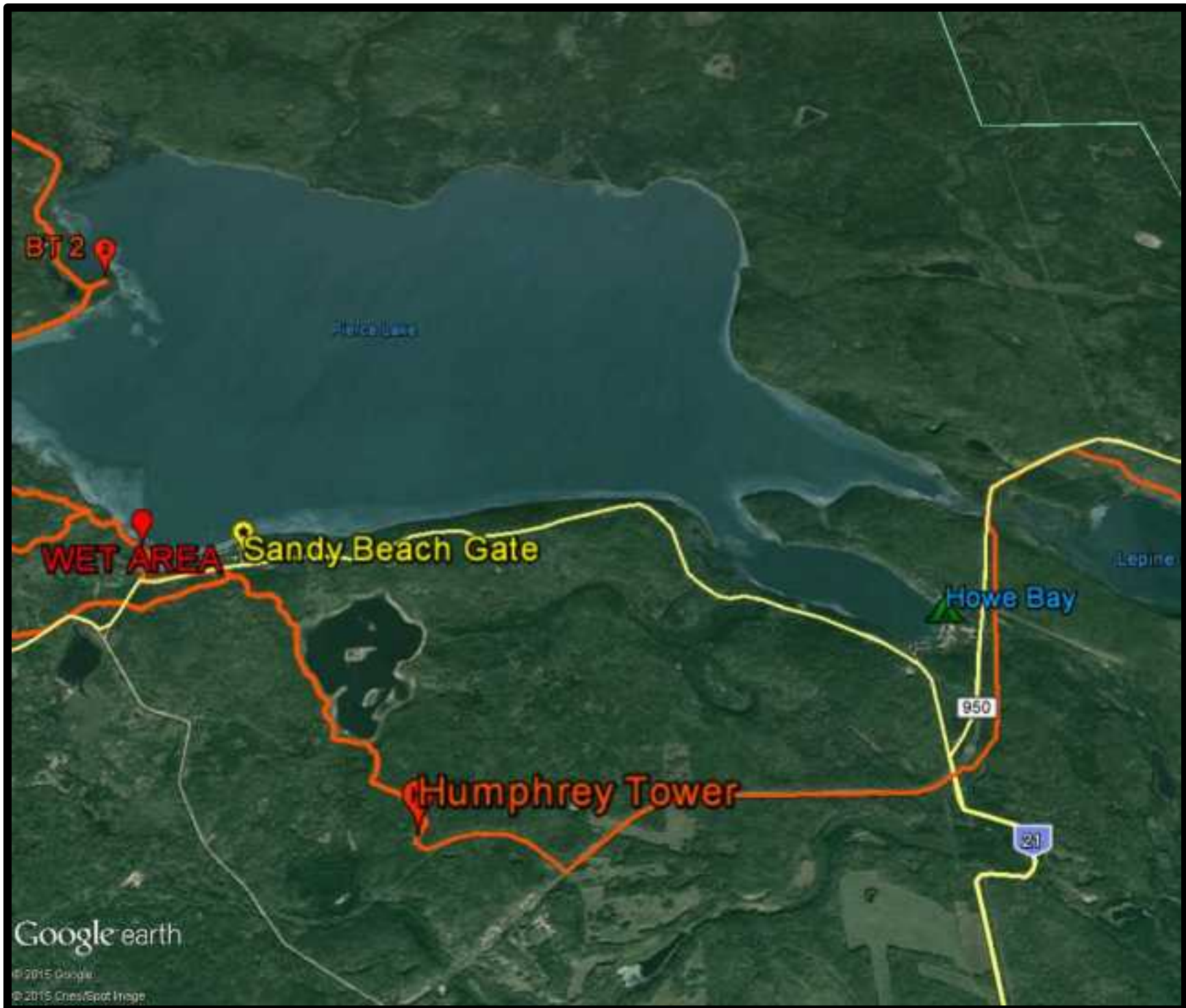
BT2 -Sandy Beach Campground-Howe Bay

After leaving BT2, the trail continues south along the shore of Pierce Lake. There are some excellent view points of the lake, and for taking pictures.

The trail will gradually turn toward the west and will eventually come out on highway 919. Continue south down the road for approximately six hundred meters and the trail then goes back in to the east and will take you back to Pierce Lake. At the signed junction in the trail turn west and follow the trail around the wet area or continue south to wet area. The wet trail arrives on the shore of Pierce Lake by the Sandy Beach Boat Launch at the campground. The dry route goes west back to highway 919 a couple of times then connects to the Humphrey Trail about three hundred meters south of the Humphrey Lake trailhead.

Sandy Beach campground has a service center with showers, a fast food concession, running water and campsites. These sites are available online (Saskparks.net) or through the call center (1-855-737-7275). If starting from the campground, find campsite 79 where the trail takes you south crossing the park access road and connects to the Humphrey Lake Trail. The trail will follow along the edge of Humphrey Lake, then continue south up a hill to a viewing tower. This provides an excellent view of where you have been!

From the viewing tower the trail heads southeasterly until it connects with an old access road. This is a well-established road and runs easterly until it connects with the main access into Howe Bay.



Approximately two kilometers to the north is Howe Bay, which has a small cottage subdivision and Pierce Lake Lodge, a commercial operation that has cabin rentals, a store and a campground. If you plan on camping at Howe Bay, you should contact the Lodge ahead of time to check availability of sites. (306-839-4517)

Howe Bay to BT 3

Once you have reached Highway 21 it is 10 km to campsite BT 3. The trail crosses Highway 21 and continues on the east side of the road and follows an old trail down to the bridge between Pierce Lake and Lepine Lake. Using the existing bridge the trail continues along the road's edge for approximately 1 km then leaves the road on the eastside of the Highway 950. From this point the trail heads east to the eastern tip of Lepine Lake. When the trail turns south on an old access road just before BT 3 there are the remnants of an old trapping cabin.

Trapping is still carried out in the park.

BT 3 is an excellent campsite overlooking the Cold River where it leaves Lepine Lake.

The trail leaves BT 3 going east and the next 1-2 km will offer some challenges.

The trail crosses two different creeks and depending on water levels you may have to wade across the creek. Under most circumstances, you will be able to pick your way across both creeks and then the trail gets back onto solid ground.

The trail comes down to the edge of Lac des Isles before it leaves in a northeasterly direction as it heads to Wolf Bay Campsite.

Did you know.....Meadow Lake Provincial Park hosts a wide array of animal species, including 175 bird species, 25 fish species, 48 mammals, 5 reptile and amphibian species. Some of these animals are abundant, such as the white-tailed deer, while others retain relatively small populations, such as the northern leopard frog. Some animals, like the red squirrel, are commonly seen while others remain reclusive, like the pine marten.

History of the Boreal Trail

Meadow Lake Provincial Park is classified as a natural environment park with a mandate to protect the ecological integrity of the local ecosystems, but also to provide a natural area for recreational pursuits.

The Boreal Trail was created to expand these recreational pursuits for the park. The park has always been known for its excellent hiking trails, and the Boreal Trail expands these opportunities immensely. The end result is a total of one hundred and fifty three kilometers of trail that currently exists within the system. Where the trail met with natural barriers such as muskegs and creeks that were impassable by foot, the trail was routed to an existing road to utilize existing bridges etc. to cross these barriers and then routed back into the forest. In addition the trail links nine existing front country campgrounds, providing a variety of start and end points.

Upgrades to the Boreal Trail

There are several loop type trails that start and end at the same location. Sandy Pines Trail, Wolf Bay Trail, Gold Creek Trail and Dennis Creek have been added. When traveling in the back country of Meadow Lake Provincial Park be extra careful, the future of the trail, and the experiences it provides, is the responsibility of all.

Resource Users of the Park

Meadow Lake Provincial Park has a variety of resource users since inception, and many existed before the area was designated as a park. There are First Nation communities that utilize the area. There are cattle grazers, trappers' cabins and trap lines in the park. Outfitters offer hunting opportunities and the area is well known for sport hunting as well. Everyone that utilizes the trail respects the cultural diversity of our resource users and in turn we ask that the wilderness experience that our hiking community is seeking is respected as well.

Detour due to Beavers

Creek Crossing Between BT 3 & Wolf Bay Campsites



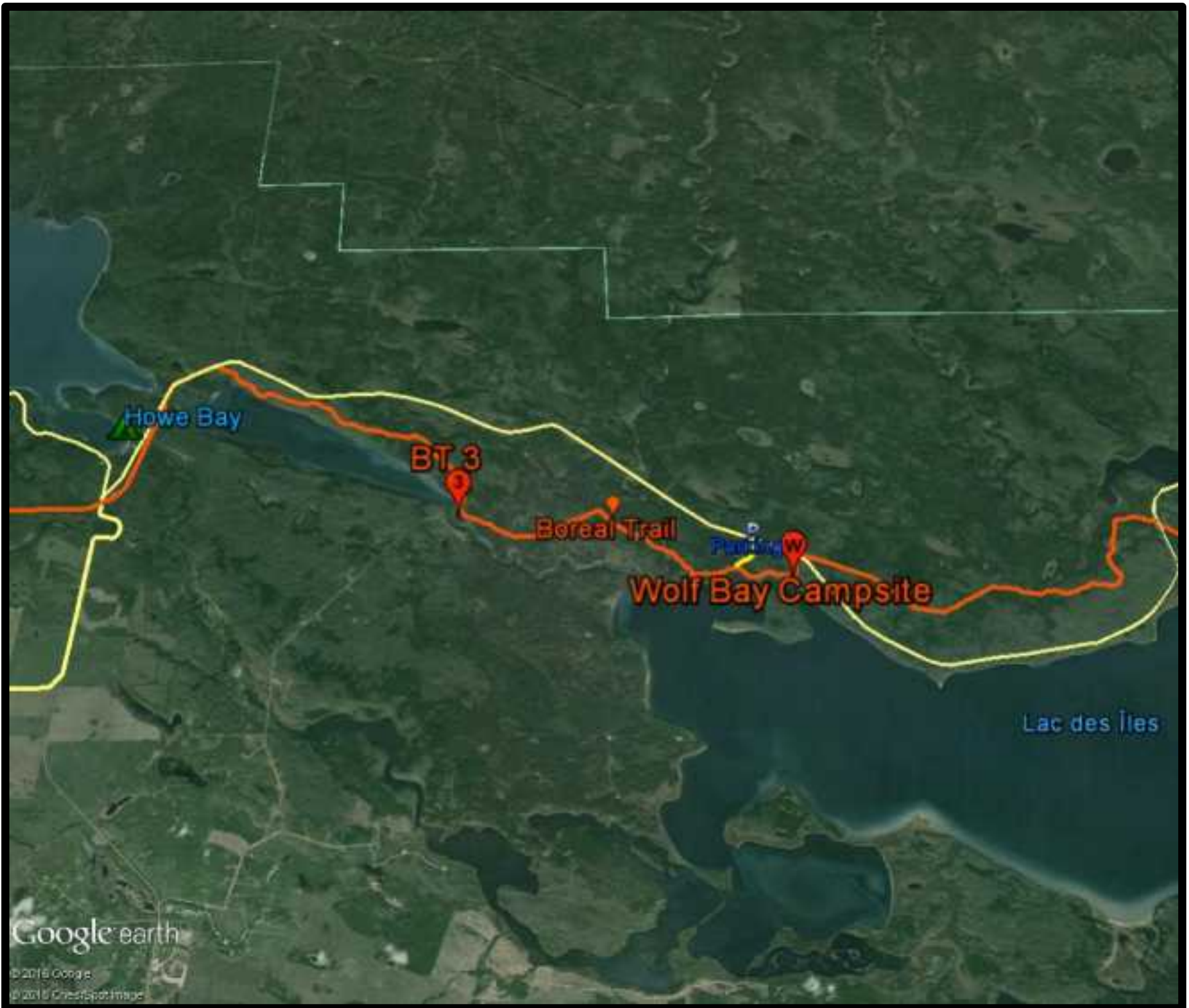
Beaver Dam Coordinate

N 54 27' 40.10" W 109 31' 9.70"

Creek Crossing Trail Coordinate

N 54 27' 35.0" W 109 31' 2.4"

When you reach this area from BT 3 you will have to work your way to the beaver dam coordinate. This beaver dam is where you will cross. Once you have crossed the creek you will make your way back to the trail which is the creek crossing coordinate. If you arrive from Wolf Bay Campsite, the creek crossing side, you will make your way the beaver dam, cross the dam, then make your way back to the trail to the south of the dam.



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Bears

(The following information on bears was adapted from the "Bears and You" brochure)

The American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) is one of the largest and most impressive animals found in Saskatchewan Provincial Parks. All bears are potentially dangerous and should be treated with respect. It is up to you, as a visitor in bear country, to minimize the conflicts that can arise when humans and bears share the same territory.

Bears are scavengers, which mean they will investigate anything that looks like a potential meal. If bears learn to associate people with food, they may lose their natural fear of humans. Proper food storage, cooking methods, and garbage handling is essential for safe camping in bear country.

Here are a few items to consider when traveling in the back country.

- Cook at least 100 m downwind from your tent.
- Cache all of your food, garbage and other scented items in the supplied food lockers, or in a tree 4-5 metres high, 1 m from the tree trunk and 400 m from camp.
- Pitch your tent in the open, away from dense bush, streams and game trails.
- Stay on trails and make noise when you travel to warn bears of your presence.
- Always be aware of your surroundings, look for signs of bear activity such as tracks, scat and digging.

- Be especially cautious if your visibility or hearing is obstructed by dense bush or running streams.
- Bears are most active during dawn and dusk, plan your travel accordingly.
- Practice the Leave No Trace principles on the back cover of this guide.

If you happen to encounter a bear remember:

- Never feed or approach a bear or cubs.
- Make a wide detour if you see a bear at a distance or wait for the bear to move on.
- If you suddenly encounter a bear, calmly back away, speaking in low tones and do not look directly at the bear.
- Stay calm, DO NOT RUN! You cannot outrun a bear.
- Climbing a tree is not an escape, black bears can easily climb trees.
- In almost all cases, if a black bear charges it is a bluff. Stand your ground and make yourself as big as possible, waving your hands in the air.
- If an attack does occur, and no escape is possible, you should defend yourself.
- Keep your pack on, and lie with your face down, hands clasped behind your neck. If you are flipped over, roll back on to your front.
- Remember, there is safety in numbers.

There are many products on the market that if used properly can assist in protecting you in bear country. Ensure that you know how to use these products and their limitations before your trip.

BT 3- Wolf Bay -BT 4-Murray Doell Campground

The distance between BT 3 and Wolf bay campsite is six kilometers. Some of this section has been previously described in the last trail description.

The trail eventually becomes a well-worn trail and joins the Wolf Bay Hiking Trail, which includes the Wolf Bay Campsite. From Wolf Bay Campsite it is a short four hundred meters hike to Highway 224 where the trail crosses the road and follows a section of trail cleared for the original road several decades ago. The trail path is well defined and continues in an easterly direction until it comes back on to Highway 224. From here you have two options, hike easterly along the road to Murray Doell campground which is approximately two kilometers away. If you continue south across the road, the trail goes down to the shore of Lac des Isles and campsite BT 4. BT 4 is 1.7 kilometers from Murray Doell Campground, and between the two, the trail crosses a creek. A new pedestrian bridge has been constructed across the creek. The trail enters the campground not far from the campground office. This campground has showers, water and campsites which are available online (tourismsaskatchewan.com) or from through call center (1-855-737-7275).

The Boreal Trail departs the campground from the parking lot at the public beach.



Murray Doell Campground-BT 5

The trail leaves the campground at the beach area parking lot and follows the interpretive trail for a short distance before heading east off the interpretive trail. The trail parallels the lake and crosses several creeks. You should have no problems crossing these creeks. This is a fairly low lying area until you get closer to Sukaw creek. Follow the trail out to the road and cross Sukaw creek on the road. Once you have crossed the creek, the trail climbs to the top of a high esker and winds its way through mixed forest, wetlands and meadows. This is one of the most picturesque sections of the trail. The trail eventually arrives at the shore of Lac des Isles once again and parallels the shore line until it comes out on an old trail. Head south down this old trail and you will find BT 5 nestled in a nice little spot with a great beach out front. Gold Creek Hiking Trail has been added to this section of the trail. There is a parking lot located along highway 950.

Did you know..... Lakes within Meadow Lake Provincial Park are all the result of glaciation. Most are kettle lakes that occupy collapsed basins that formed when ice blocks from the retreating glacier, melted. Mistohay Lake occupies a valley that was cut into the till by glacial meltwaters and sits about 200 m higher than Matheson Lake, and is older. Greig Lake and Waterhen Lake are remnants of glacial Meadow Lake.

BT 5 - Highway 224

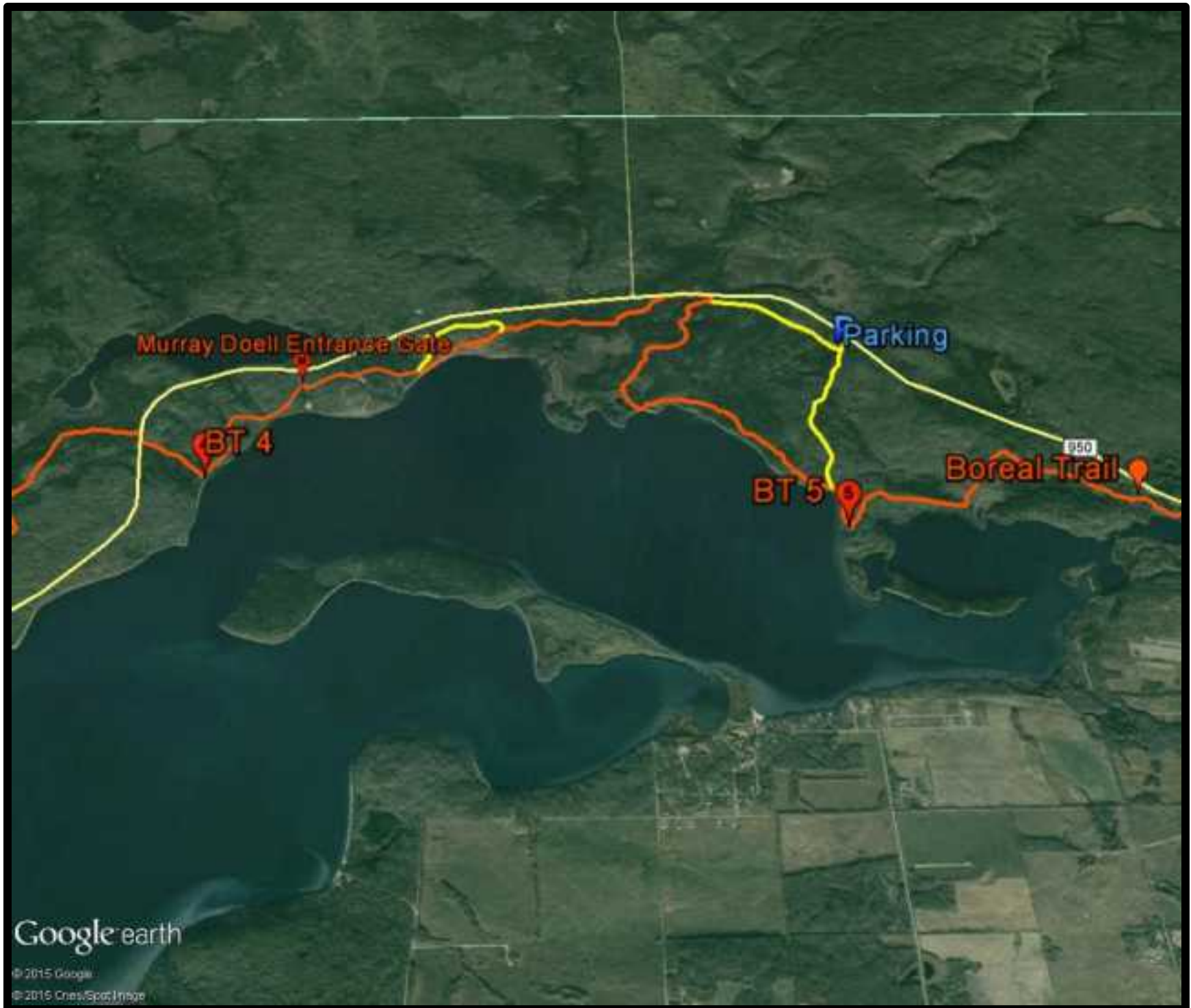
The trail leaves BT 5 and heads north then makes a turn to the east. You are at the east end of Lac des Isles Lake you will be following ridges along the lake then turn north into the forest, eventually turning east again to follow the shore of the Waterhen River. Portions of this section are new so the walking surface may be rough at some points. The distance from BT5 to highway 224 is 6.8 km.



Did you know.... Meadow Lake Provincial Park is located in the Hatfield Valley, between the Mostoos Hills and the Thickwood Hills. As the glacier melted, some of the material in the ice was sorted by water to form stratified deposits ovetop of bedrock. These glacial deposits vary in thickness from 14 m to 250 m in the Meadow Lake area. Depending on the deposition process various glacial features can be found in the park.

If you happen to be low on supplies, the village of Goodsoil is south of the entry gate. There are a couple of stores here you could restock your supplies, or perhaps this is the take out point for your trip. If you are planning on starting your trip here, make sure that you have registered with one of the administration offices in either Dorintosh (306 236-7680) or Pierceland (306 839-6250). If you have registered electronically then advise the gate staff that you are beginning your trip.







Highway 224 – River Bend – BT 6

The trail passes over Highway 224 and enters on the old road straight across from the Highway 950 junction then continues east through the forest. It's a short 2.5 km hike to River Bend Campsite located on a bend on the Waterhen River. Tall spruce trees shelter the site from the west side while giving you a beautiful view of the river to the south. The trail continues eastward to Mistohay creek. This section of the trail has some different topography compared to the rest of the trail. The trail runs along the edge of hills, and in one area you will be able to look over Mistohay Creek for quite a distance. If you want a great view of Mistohay Creek you can climb the hill overlooking the creek by taking the opening on the trail. This hill is a very challenging climb as it straight up for about 80 meters. Keep your eyes open for moose in this area.

Once the trail crosses Mistohay creek, it turns south and comes to the edge of the Waterhen River once again. This section of the trail will bring you into the area where cattle grazing occur. The trail crosses a couple of fence lines, but there are gates at these crossings, if the gate is open when you go through, leave it open, and if is closed, please close it, or climb over/through the fence.


The distance between River Bend and BT 6 is 7.1 kilometers. The BT 6 campsite is located on the north shore of the Waterhen River.

BT 6-BT 7

It is 9 km from BT 6 to BT 7. The trail follows the north shore of the Waterhen River and as mentioned earlier, this area has cattle grazing. Both the BT 6 and BT 7 campsites are prime spots to see wildlife. Moose and white-tailed deer are common in the area, and there will be plenty of birds on the river.



| Boreal Trail Distances | |
|---|---------|
| Trailhead (Cold River) to Campsite BT 1 | 5.1 km |
| Campsite BT 1 to Campsite BT2 | 4.1 km |
| BT2 to Sandy Beach Campground | 9.4 km |
| Sandy Beach Campground to BT 3 | 16.9 km |
| BT 3 to Wolf Bay Campsite | 6 km |
| Wolf Bay Campsite to BT 4 | 8.4 km |
| BT 4 to Murray Doell Campground | 1.7 km |
| Murray Doell Campground to BT5 | 8.1 km |
| BT 5 to Highway 224 | 6.8 km |
| Highway 224 to River Bend Campsite | 2.5 km |
| River Bend Campsite to BT 6 | 7.1 km |
| BT 6 to BT 7 | 9 km |
| BT 7 to Chalet | 5.6 km |
| Chalet to Kimball Lake | 11 km |
| Chalet to BT 8 | 9 km |
| BT 8 to Kimball Lake | 8.5 km |
| Kimball Lake to Greig Lake Trailhead | 10.4 km |
| Greig Lake Trailhead to Greig Lake Road | 5.7 km |
| Greig Lake Road to Park Admin Office | 6 km |





Mistohay Lake

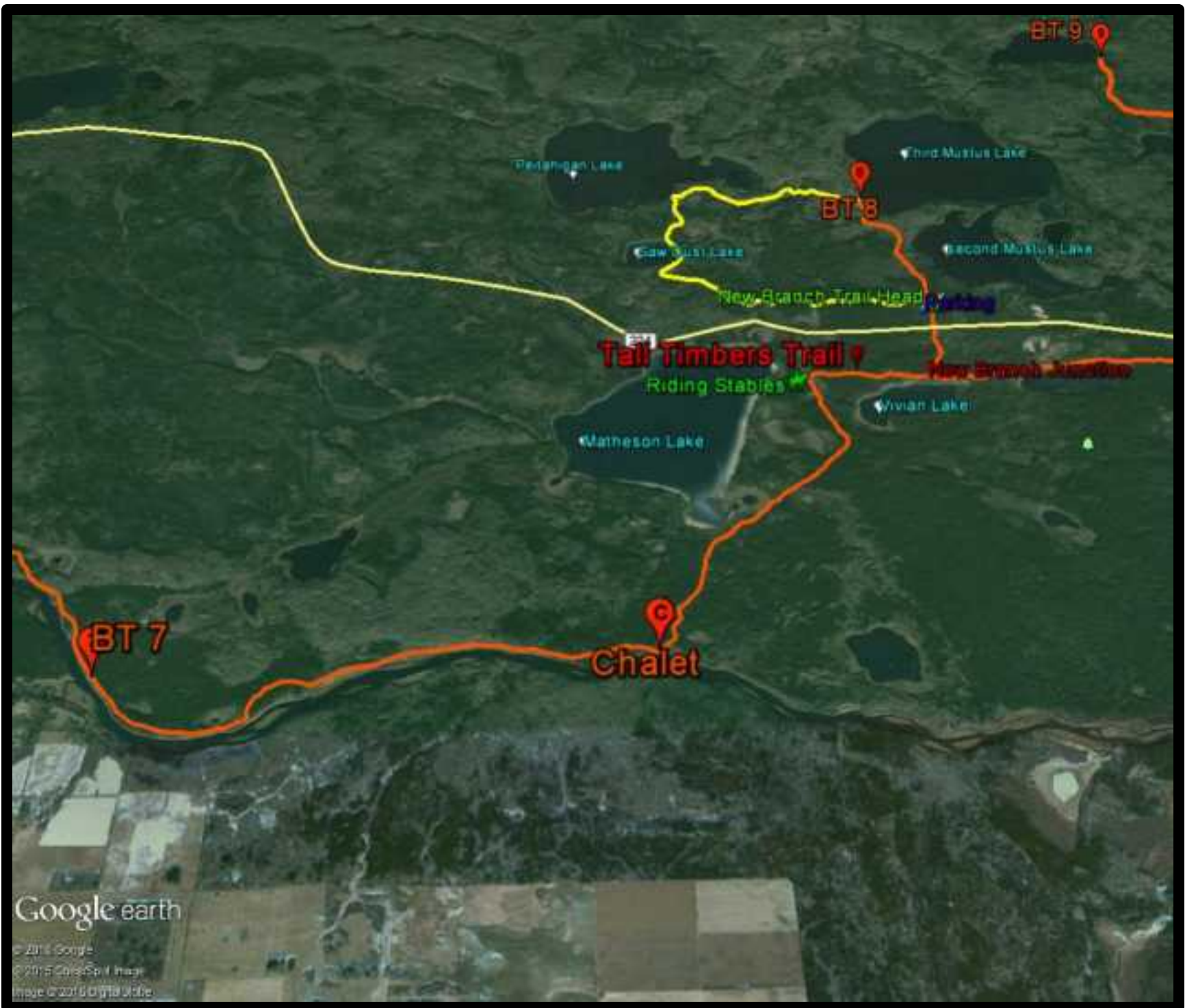
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BT 6

BT 7

Google earth

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BT 7-Chalet-Kimball Lake

As you prepare to leave this campsite, the group should be aware of the travel plans for the day. The Chalet is 5.6 km to the east. The Chalet is used as a warm up shelter in the winter. This section of the trail is part of Route 66. The Trans Canada snowmobile trail. The chalet camp has a small cabin, fire pit and outdoor toilet. The trail continues north to the Riding Stables and the Tall Timbers Trail that turns east toward Kimball Lake. From Tall Timber Trails you can access Matheson Campground to the northwest or Vivian Campground to the east. Both campgrounds have limited services. Matheson does have water. North of Vivian Lake you can turn north on the trail and continue on to BT 8. If you continue east you will come to Kimball Lake.

Kimball Lake Campground has one service centers with showers, laundry, campsites, store, and water. The trail will take you by the cottage subdivision on the north side of Kimball Lake and to the boat launch. From the boat launch follow the Boreal Trail carsonites to the group camp area then take the road to the tennis court road continue east on the road until the trail turns north into the forest. The distance from Chalet to Kimball Boat Launch is 11 km.

Kimball Lake - Greig Lake Trailhead

Once you follow the Tennis Court road you enter back into the forest about 500 m east on the north side of the road. The trail takes you to Rusty Creek where you will cross on the existing bridge on highway 224. The trail goes back in on the north side of Rusty Creek then turns north toward First Mustus Environmental Campground. This campground has group tent site, a camp kitchen with food lockers, composting toilet and a solar powered water system. This campground is 2.3 km from Kimball Lake. To reach the trail head at Greig Lake, go east along the road until it heads north along a well-worn path, locally referred to as the Dennis Creek trail. At this point you have the option of taking the long or short route to Greig Lake Trailhead. Following the Dennis Creek Trail it will take you 6.7 km to trailhead or you can take the short route which is 4.6km to trailhead.

BT 9 - Greig Lake Trailhead

Once you are on the Dennis Creek road you have the option to continue to BT 9 on Fourth Mustus Lake. The trail crosses Dennis Creek and continues west to the lake. The trail going to the east off the Dennis Creek trail takes you to the Grieg Lake Trailhead. It follows the esker then eventually you will come to an open field which will take you to the trailhead. Waters Edge Eco Lodge is a short 500m on the road east if you have booked a stay. www.watersedgeecolodge.ca

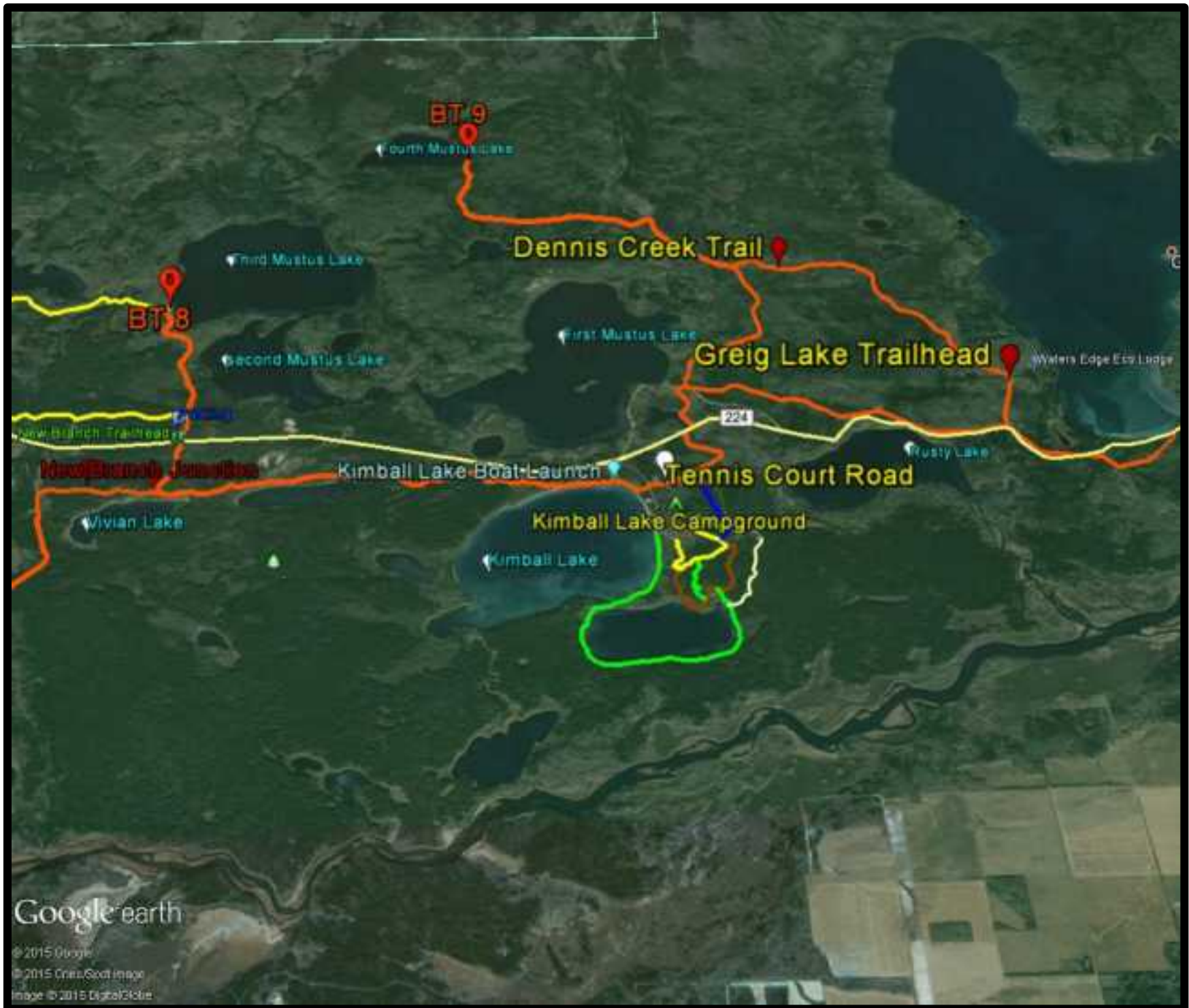
The end is almost near! The trailhead on the west side of Greig Lake is 11.7 km from the Dorintosh Park Administration Office.

Some basic information to consider while venturing in the back country

- Your group travel will only be as quick as the slowest person in the group.
- Be familiar with your equipment. You do not want to find out that your new stove does not work when you are kilometers away from anywhere.
- Do not rely on only a GPS for navigation. Someone should be carrying a compass and know how to use it.

Meadow Lake Provincial Park Contact Information:
Park Offices
Dorintosh 306 236-7680
Pierceland 306 839-6250
Website
www.tourismsaskatchewan.com
Emergency 911

Park Watch: 1-800-667-1788





PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you will visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass and GPS to eliminate the use of rock cairns or flagging tape.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 70 metres from lakes, streams (if possible)
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas

- Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

In Pristine areas

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in cat holes dug 15 to 20 centimetres deep, at least 70 metres from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 70 metres away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap.
- Scatter strained dishwater.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, camp furniture, or dig trenches.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a light-weight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Be sure that all ashes are cooled in the supplied barbecues before you leave the campsite.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other visitors on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

