

Iron Horse Trail

The longest section of continuous Trans Canada Trail in Alberta passes through small communities, historic sites and natural areas

What Makes This Spot Hot?

- 300 kilometres of continuous trail stretching from Waskatenau to Cold Lake, with a branch to Heinsburg.
- Explore the trail on foot, by mountain bike, on horseback, by ATV or snowmobile, or in a Red River cart.
- Enjoy spectacular views and see birds, wildlife, farms, rural communities and historic sites.

Address: Lat: 54.0954° N,
Long: 112.7827° W
(Waskatenau—western
end of the trail)
Tel: (780) 645-2913
Website: ironhorsetrail.ca
Open: Year round
Activities:



There are many special places along Alberta's Iron Horse Trail, a 300 kilometre trail in east central Alberta that was built on an abandoned CN rail bed. The trail passes through small rural communities, farms, and beautiful natural areas as it traverses the transition zone between Alberta's Aspen Parkland and Northern Boreal Forest biomes. Watch for deer, moose, coyotes, badgers, beavers and bears near the trail, and keep your eye on the skies

for bird species—this part of Alberta is a bird watcher's paradise.

In Alberta's early years, railways were the backbone of transportation and communities were located near stops along rail lines. Over many years roads were built, and some rail lines became uneconomical. When the lines in east central Alberta were retired and the rails were pulled up, local stakeholders and community leaders recognized the opportunity



for trail development on the abandoned rail bed that was left behind. Local volunteers, businesses, groups and associations, municipalities and government organizations all worked together with the support of the Trans-Canada Trail Foundation (thegreattrail.ca) and Alberta TrailNet Society (albertatrailnet.com) to develop and maintain the magnificent recreational trail you see today.

There are 14 communities along the trail, which

would take multiple days to explore in its entirety. Most people break the journey into smaller sections. There are 20 trail staging areas and three provincial parks along the way. In the small towns near the trail you'll find municipal campgrounds, motels, hotels and B&Bs. One of the highlights of the trail is the Beaver River Trestle Bridge near Cold Lake. At 1 kilometre long and 60 metres high, the view from the top is spectacular.

↑ Kolby Olsen at the Beaver River Trestle Bridge.

DID YOU KNOW?



People sometimes refer to this part of Alberta as the *Land of Big*. The world's largest pumpkins are in Smoky Lake, the largest mushrooms in Vilna, and the world's first UFO landing pad is in St. Paul.