



Liard River Hot Springs

PROVINCIAL PARK



Welcome to Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park. This park, located on the Liard Plain protects a hot spring ecosystem of national significance. It is the second largest in Canada and is surrounded by a lush boreal spruce forest and marsh. Many of the plants survive at this latitude only because of the effect that the hot springs have on the climate in the park. Known as the “Liard Tropical Valley”, it is a popular destination for both visitors and wildlife.

Peace Region

Park History

In early times the Kaska First Nations lived and hunted in the area. Later, trappers and prospectors discovered the hotpools and in 1835 the Hudson Bay Company Factor Robert Campbell recorded their presence in his diary.

The first boardwalk and pool facilities were built by the American Army during the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. The highway access opened the area to visitors and subsequently, Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park was created in 1957 to help protect this unique area.

Access

Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park is reached via the Alaska Highway at kilometres 765 (Mile 478). It is approximately 317 kilometres North West of Fort Nelson.

Facilities



The park has 53 campsites, each with picnic tables and fire-rings. Toilets, water and garbage facilities are provided.

Reservations accepted for 20 sites. For reservation information contact: 1-800-689-9025 or www.discovercamping.ca



Picnic area contains a playground and picnic shelter. Picnic tables, toilets, water and garbage facilities are also provided.



The boardwalk trail leads to viewpoints overlooking the Hanging Gardens. Here wildflowers bloom on natural terraces created by mineral deposits from the hot springs.

Geology

Deep beneath the Earth's surface, ground water is heated. The hot ground water is forced upwards and reaches the Earth's surface through cracks called thrust faults. Cracks such as these pass through the sedimentary rock beneath Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park and the hot water, rich in minerals, seeps out. As the hot spring water bubbles from the earth it reacts with air and certain minerals are deposited. Calcium carbonate is one of the minerals that precipitate to form tufa. Accumulations of tufa deposits over hundreds of years form the terraced bases of the Hanging Gardens.

Regulations

- ▶ Dogs must be on a leash at all times while in the park. Bicycles and pets are not allowed on the boardwalk or near the pool areas.
- ▶ Liquor is not permitted in public places including the day use area and pools.
- ▶ Camping is not permitted in the day-use parking lot and the park gate is closed from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- ▶ Park Visitors value the peace and quiet of provincial parks and campgrounds. Keep noise to a minimum at all times. During quiet time hours (11:00 p.m. to 7:00 am) do not operate generators, radios, etc.



For More Information

BC Parks

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection

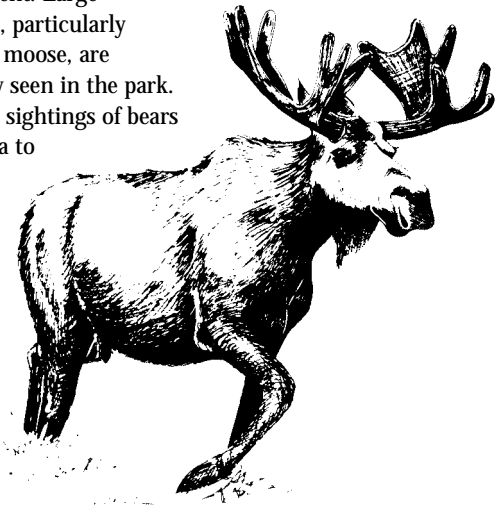


Plants

Over 250 species of boreal forest plants – influenced by the microclimate of the hot springs – are present here. Only 14 occur at this latitude because of the hot springs environment. There are over 14 species of orchids. The hot springs provide a 2°C increase in annual air temperature and a higher humidity creating luxuriant growth. Giant ostrich ferns and cow parsnip give the area a tropical look. Carnivorous plants are found here as well and include sundew, butterwort and aquatic bladderwort.

Wildlife

Over 104 bird species and 28 different mammals visit or live in the park. Several members of the warbler, sparrow and thrush family are common residents and are readily observed and heard, especially in spring. The warm waters created by the hot springs provide important habitat for lake chub, a fish that is normally found in colder waters but has adapted to the hot springs environment. Large mammals, particularly bears and moose, are frequently seen in the park. Report all sightings of bears in the area to park staff.



Seeing these large animals in the wild is often very exciting and memorable. However, It is important to respect all wild animals by keeping your distance and resisting the urge to approach or feed them. Once animals become accustomed to being around people, they are in danger of losing that very thing that makes them special: their wildness.

Feeding wildlife will:

- ▶ disrupt their normal behaviour
- ▶ deny you the opportunity to observe an animal behaving naturally
- ▶ tame the animals, making them more likely to be hit by cars
- ▶ result in some animals becoming very aggressive and others losing their natural fear of people
- ▶ It is illegal to feed wildlife.

Help Keep Wildlife Wild

- ▶ Keep food away from bears and other animals by properly storing food in vehicle and disposing of garbage.
- ▶ Do not cook or store food in your tent and keep your campsite clean.
- ▶ Travel in groups, keep on established paths and trails, and travel during daylight hours.
- ▶ Watch for animals and signs of animals: tracks, droppings, diggings, torn-up logs and turned over rocks.
- ▶ Do not approach bears.



Park Activities

Hotpools

Adventure into the unique hot springs ecosystem. There are two bathing pools: Alpha and Beta. Follow the boardwalk 500 metres through the marsh to Alpha pool, and from there continue on another 300 metres to Beta pool. Alpha pool is the warmest pool reaching 53°C at its source while the deeper Beta pool averages about 42°C. Change houses and toilets are located at both pools.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience, and to help protect this sensitive environment bathers must follow certain rules:

- ▶ No Lifeguard is on duty; always use caution and supervise children.
- ▶ 15 to 20 minutes is the recommended maximum time spent in the hot spring pools; extended stays can cause overheating (hyperthermia).
- ▶ Bathing suits must be worn.
- ▶ Soaps and shampoos are not permitted.

Winter Activities

Visitors to the hot springs in winter will be amazed by the winter wonderland created by the snow, hoar frost and steam. The hot springs maintain the same temperature and are open for swimming all year.

Winter camping for self-contained units is available and camping fees are in effect all year.

Help Protect the Parkland

Enjoy your visit to Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park, but leave it as you have found it so that future visitors may enjoy the park as you have.