Where forest and tundra meet

Street sign at the entrance to the park reads: Welcome to the Traditional Territory of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in.

At the south end of the park, forests follow the river valleys. Rainbows of alpine tundra carpet the slopes between dramatic rock formations. At the north end, a slender view of Canada’s Arctic reaches down into the park. In this breathless, wind-swept tundra, look for ground-hugging plants and unusual permafrost landforms such as pingos and peatlands.

A variety of habitats mean a diversity of life. Caribou, moose, Dall’s sheep, grizzly and black bears, wolves, hoary marmots, pikas, shrews and voles all call Tombstone Territorial Park home. Along with subarctic mammals, the park harbours rare Beringian plants and insects found nowhere else on earth. Biodiversity has spread to more than 148 species of birds. Arctic tundra breeders break up against northern boreal species.

The continental divide cuts the park into two watersheds. To the south, the Klondike, Hart and Chandindu rivers flow the Yukon River watershed while waters eventually empty into the Bering Sea. The Blackstone River and its many springs are part of the Mackenzie River watershed that flows north to the Arctic Ocean.

Cultural connections

At least 8,000 years of human history is preserved within the park’s boundaries. This area is one of the most important cultural and hunting sites in the Traditional Territory of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. People have come to the Tombstone area for thousands of years. The open tundra landscape makes it easy to spot wildlife for good hunting. Nearby forests provide shelter and firewood. Dolly Varden and grizzlies provide a food supply even in winter. Archeological sites tell us stories of look-out sites and ancient camps of caribou hunters. Signs remain of Han and Chadron Point house pits, elevated pole caches, hunting blinds, tent frames and graves.

Welcome

You are welcome here, but please respect natural, historical and cultural artifacts or sites and leave them undisturbed. This is a remote park with few established trails. Even if you are a hunter, please respect other park users.

Hunters may encounter First Nation subsistence hunters or licensed subsistence hunters in park boundaries, especially in the fall. When you see hunters, please be respectful. You are witnessing an important part of northern culture. If you are a hunter, please respect other park users.

Wildlife and scenic viewing

Wildlife viewing

To the north of the Dempster Highway, opportunities to view wildlife are abundant. Bighorn sheep, caribou, elk, moose, snowshoe hares and wolverines can often be seen. If you can see the tracks, you may have a chance of seeing the animal. For a higher chance of viewing, travel in the early morning or late evening. If you see a good spot to watch an animal, such as near a grassy field, it is a good idea to go back at another time to increase your chances of seeing the animal.

To the south of the Dempster Highway, opportunities to view wildlife are also abundant. Bighorn sheep, caribou, elk, moose, snowshoe hares and wolverines can often be seen. If you can see the tracks, you may have a chance of seeing the animal. For a higher chance of viewing, travel in the early morning or late evening. If you see a good spot to watch an animal, such as near a grassy field, it is a good idea to go back at another time to increase your chances of seeing the animal.

Biology and scenic viewing

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Keep it wild
Plan ahead. Prepare to leave no trace.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Use existing trails and campsites in pristine areas, spread out on durable ground.

Dispose of waste properly. Pack it in, pack it out. When outdoors are not available, use human waste in a small hole 60 metres from water, camp and trails.

Leave what you find. Leave natural, historical and cultural artifacts undisturbed.

Hiking
In Tombstone is no “walk in the park.” Enjoying its incredible backcountry means taking responsibility for your own safety, and respecting the experience of others. This is a remote park with few established trails. Even if you plan on a day hike, prepare for rough terrain and drastic weather changes. Read Into the Yukon wilderness and check the status of trails, weather and wildlife sightings at the centre.

Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (return)</th>
<th>Duration (return)</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tombstone Interpretive Centre</td>
<td>km 71.5</td>
<td>1 h</td>
<td>1- 2 h</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tombstone Mountain Campground</td>
<td>km 72</td>
<td>1 h</td>
<td>1- 2 h</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow leave no trace principles. For bear safety, separate camping, cooking and food storage by 100 meters. Store food and garbage in bear-proof containers, for loan at the centre. We strongly advise you to leave a trip plan with a reliable friend or family member. Include your planned routes and stops on a map, your expected date of return and when to notify the authorities if you don’t show up. You can fill out an online trip plan at adventureymca.ca.

Keep attractants in your vehicle. Cooking odours can attract bears. Keep bear-deterrent sprays and pepper sprays at hand.

Backcountry camping
Registration is required for all backcountry camping in the park. Register backcountry trips at the Tombstone Interpretive Centre. Permits are required for the Grizzly, Divide and Talus lakes backcountry campgrounds. These campgrounds have tent pads, cooking platforms, grey water disposal andouthouses. Permits are $12. Reserve your campsite online at Yukon.ca. Permits are $12. Reserve your campsite online at Yukon.ca. Permits are $12. Reserve your campsite online at Yukon.ca.

Tombstone Interpretive Centre
Tombstone Interpretive Centre km 71.5
Open mid-May to mid-September, seven days a week, including holidays. Connected to Tombstone Mountain Campground by a nature walking trail; the centre offers displays on the cultural and natural history of the park and highway. Centre staff offer free interpretive talks and walks on a posted schedule.

Backcountry hiking
Register backcountry trips at the Tombstone Interpretive Centre. Permits are required for the Grizzly, Divide and Talus lakes backcountry campgrounds. These campgrounds have tent pads, cooking platforms, grey water disposal and outhouses. Permits are $12. Reserve your campsite online at Yukon.ca.

Tombstone Mountain Campground
Tombstone Mountain Campground km 72
Just north of the centre, the campground of few campfires, picnic tables, outhouses, water and a picnic shelter. All campers must register.

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Yukon Parks
Yukon.parks@gov.yk.ca
Yukon 1-800-661-0408, (Whitehorse) 867-993-7714

Drivers are often surprised by fox, ptarmigan, grouse, caribou and mouse running onto the road. Please drive slowly enough so you can pull over and stop safely. Use binoculars, spotting scopes or telephoto lenses to get a better look.

Wildlife and you
Bear isn’t the only wildlife attracted to human smells. Squirrels, ravens, gray jays (AKA “camp robbers”) and martins are notorious thieves. Help them stay wild and healthy by keeping your food and garbage secure.

Bear safety starts with the following basics. Learn about bears and how to prevent negative encounters.

Keep attractants in your vehicle or in the food cache near the kitchen shelter. Put waste in the bear-proof garbage containers.

Food and garbage are major attractants. Never leave food, dishes, garbage, cosmetics or any smelly item where a bear could get it, especially in your tent. Store them in bear-proof containers away from your camp.

Pick up a copy of How you can stay safe in bear country at the centre, any Department of Environment officer or a Visitor Information Centre. We strongly advise you to read it. Ask to view the Staying Safe in Bear Country video.

Wildlife and scenic viewing
Several scenic viewpoints and wildlife viewing sites are found along the Dempster Highway. Please drive slowly enough so you can pull over and stop safely. Use binoculars, spotting scopes or telephoto lenses to get a better look.

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