

Alberta Photography Trip

Amy, Debbie & Jane

September 6-15 2025

Cost: ~\$2500 each

Drive: 1350 km

Walking: 77,281 steps or 55km



Map Of the Trip



Accommodations – Mountain Aire Resort

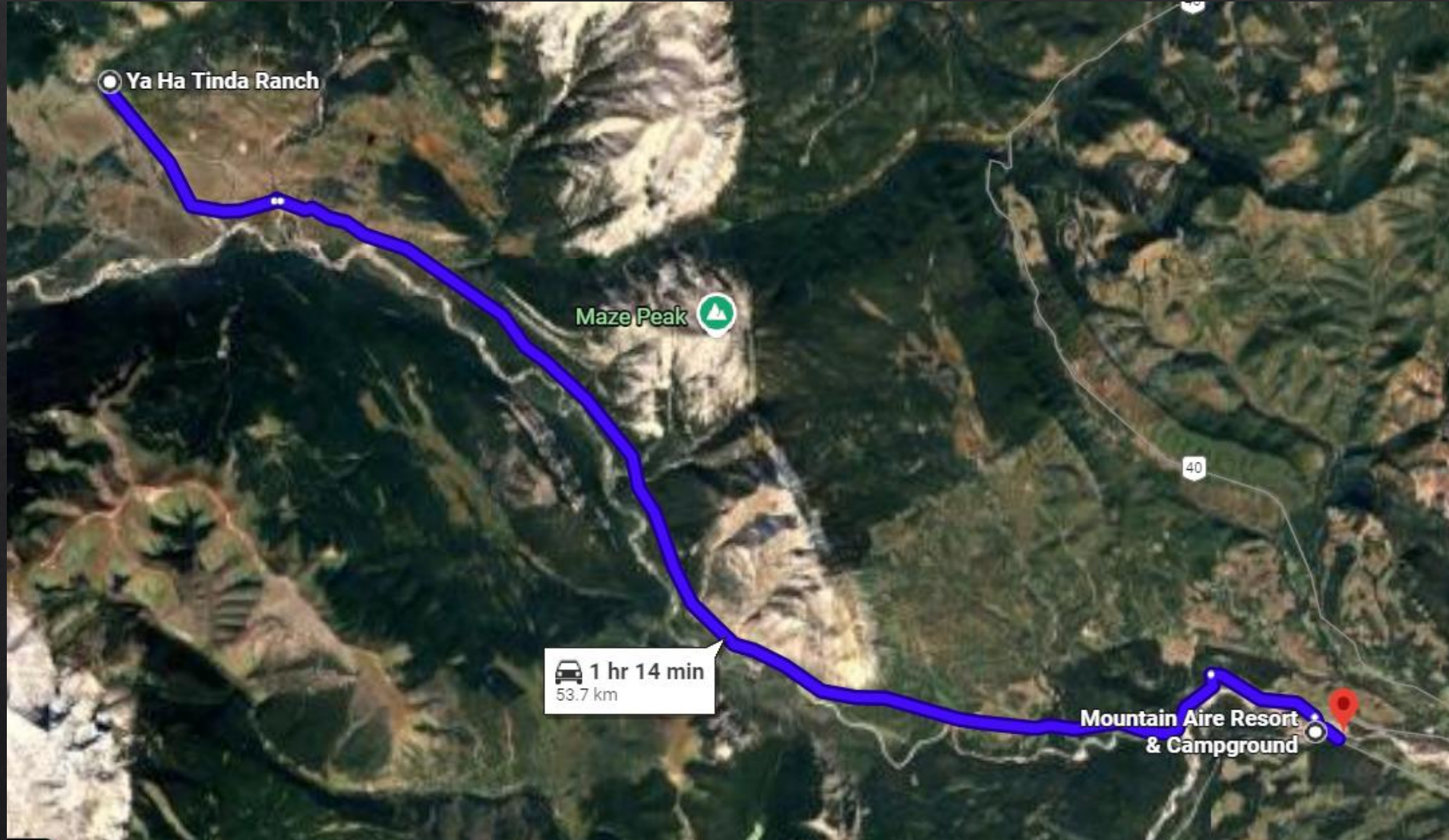








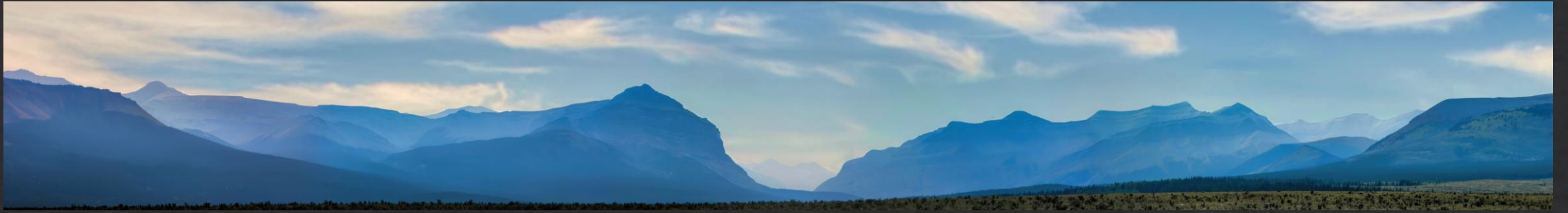
Drove to Ya Ha Tinda Ranch



Stops Along the Way









YA HA TINDA 

Signpost with icons and text, partially obscured.

Searching for Wild Horses





Wild Horses in Video

Amy



Our Encounter with a Silver Fox

Jane was quick to recognize



Gordon John Buchanan MBE
is a Scottish wildlife
cameraman, filmmaker and
presenter



He was in Alberta to film a new show called “Wild Horses, the Rockies and Me”.
“Set against the stunning peaks, open grasslands and shadowy pine forests that fringe the eastern slopes of the Rockies, Gordon rides out on his own steed hoping to get to places only a wild horse can reach.”





Horse Behaviours – Stud Pile (doesn't smell!)



Flehmen



Flehmen is defined as a behavior exhibited primarily by males, in which the animal raises its nose into the air with the mouth slightly open to facilitate pheromone detection by an odor detection organ in the roof of the mouth.

Horse Behaviours – Snaking



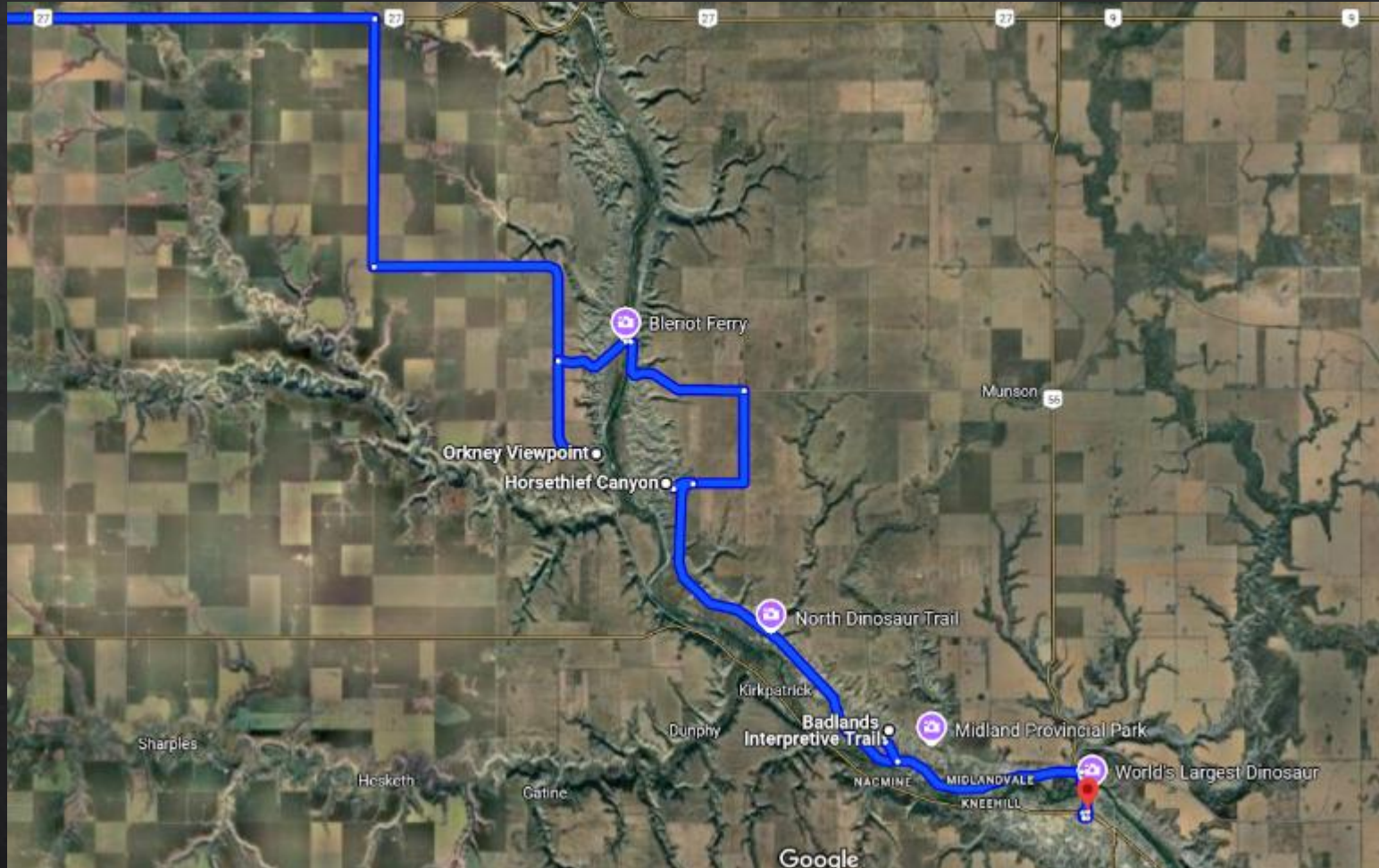
Wild Horses in Video

Debbie





Drove to Drumheller via Orkney Viewpoint, Bleriot Ferry and Horsethief Canyon





Orkney Viewpoint is a very simple, somewhat private natural lookout point situated on the high red rock cliffs - above the Red Deer River



Dinosaur Trail

BLERIOT FERRY

BLERIOT FERRY WAS NAMED AFTER
ANDRE BLERIOT WHO HOMESTEADED HERE
AROUND 1904. LOUIS BLERIOT, HIS BROTHER
WAS THE FIRST MAN TO FLY THE ENGLISH
CHANNEL.

DRUMHELLER & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WARNING
SAFETY REASONS
WILL NOT BE
LOADING DURING
METEOROLOGICAL STORMS

Alberta's
History
300 m

Historical Trail
BLERIOT FERRY
BLERIOT FERRY WAS NAMED AFTER
ANDRE BLERIOT WHO HOMESTEADED HERE
AROUND 1904. LOUIS BLERIOT, HIS BROTHER,
WAS THE FIRST MAN TO FLY THE ENGLISH
CHANNEL.
OPERATED BY DISTRICT CULTURE & HERITAGE

STOP





Horse Thief Canyon

This area of the Red Deer River valley earned its name during the early settler years when ranching was the main industry. Thousands of horses ranged from here to beyond the "Hand Hills" to the east. Legend has it that horses would disappear into these canyons of the Red Deer River valley, later to reappear carrying a different brand. Hence the name ... "Horse Thief Canyon".

Some of the most significant fossil discoveries ever made from the Age of Reptiles have been discovered in Dinosaur Provincial Park and surrounding badland areas. This area is very rich in fossils with some 35 species of dinosaurs including hadrosaurus, ceratopsians, ankylosaurs, and theropods and other vertebrates such as fish, turtles, crocodiles, plesiosaurs, and champsosaurs dating back 70 million years.

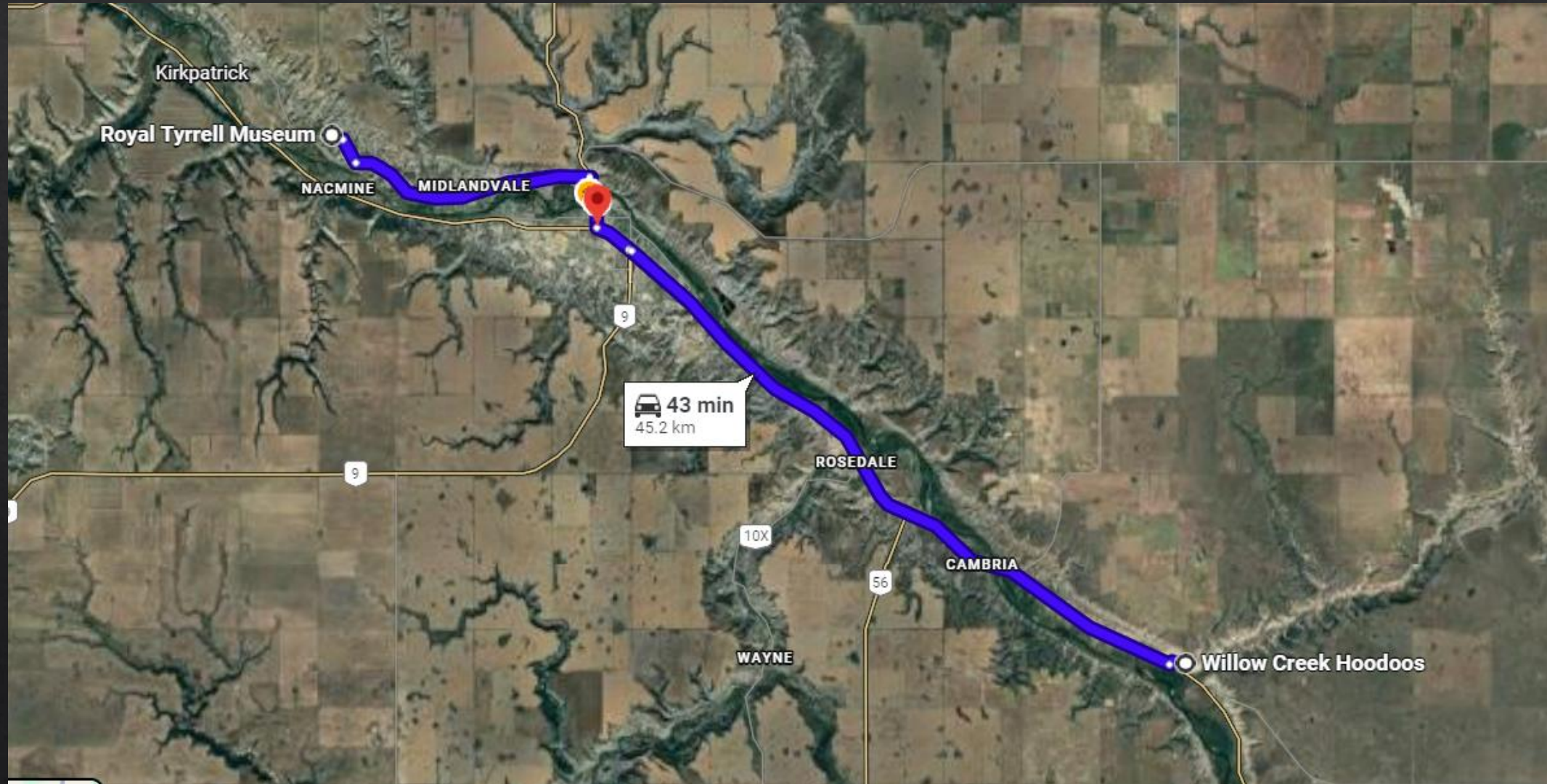
STARLAND
COUNTY







Drumheller – Royal Tyrrell Museum & Willow Creek Hoodoos



The Royal Tyrrell Museum



On August 12, 1884, Joseph Burr Tyrrell found a 70-million-year-old skull of a carnivorous dinosaur near Drumheller. In 1905, Tyrrell's find was named *Albertosaurus Sarcophagus* ("flesh-eating lizard from Alberta").

The Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology opened on September 25, 1985. (The "Royal" appellation was added in 1990) It attracts more than 430,000 visitors annually. The Museum displays one of the world's largest collections of dinosaurs, and has become world-renowned for engaging exhibits and public education programs.







Weight Comparison to a Dinosaur!



Willow Creek Hoodoos

The Willow Creek Hoodoos are tall, eroded pillars of sandstone capped with a more resilient rock top.

Their distinctive appearance was created through the deposit of materials during the Cretaceous Period between 70 and 75 million years ago.

The soft base is formed from dark brown marine shale. The caprocks contain almost 40% calcite cement, making them particularly resistant to erosion.

The visible horizontal banding on the columns speaks of the ancient environments of inland sea and coastal swamps that in time became coal deposits.

Local Blackfoot and Cree people contended that the Hoodoos or *matapiiski* ("the people"), were petrified giants who came to life at night to protect the land.









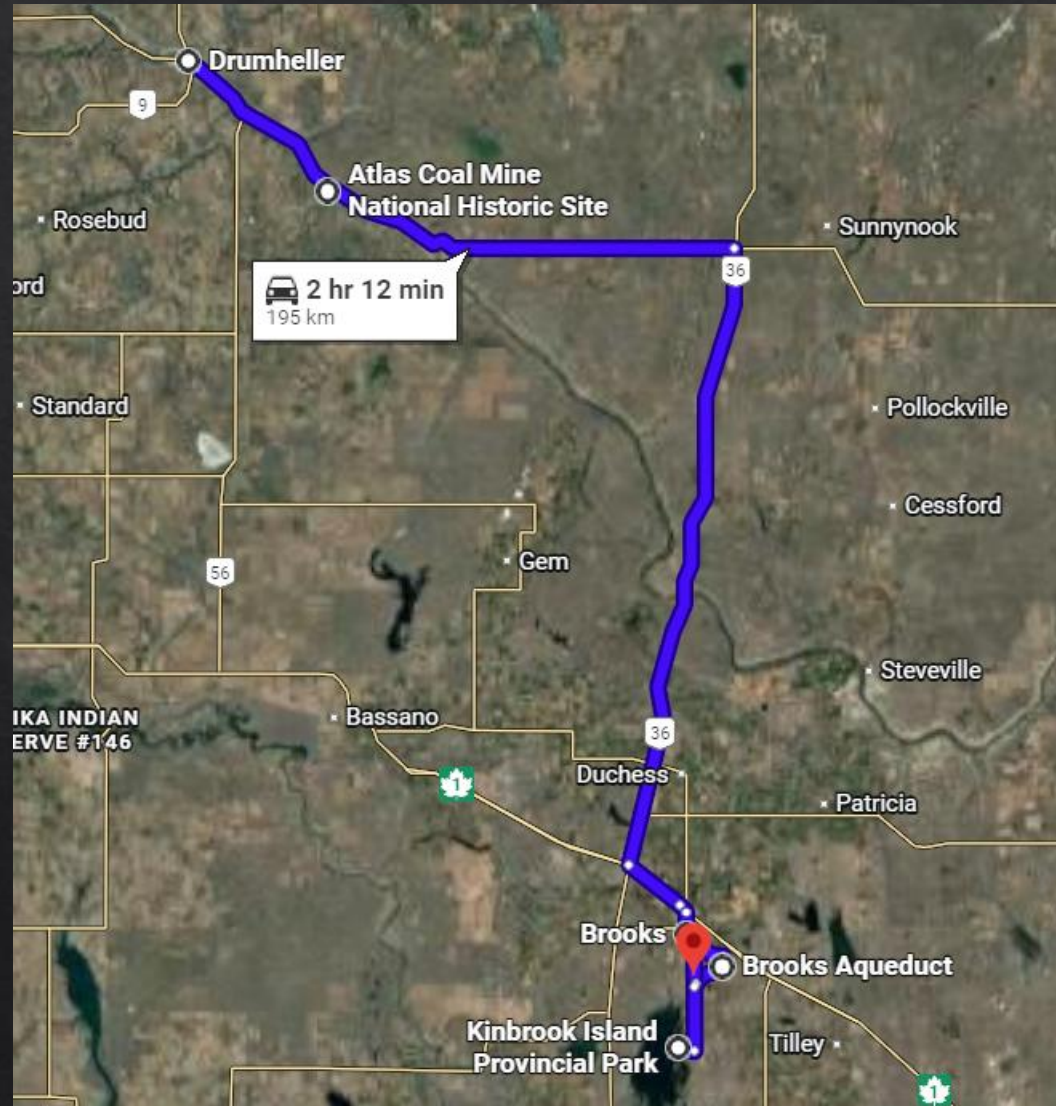








Drove from Drumheller to Brooks with Stops at Atlas Coal Mine and Kinbrook Island



Atlas Coal Mine



The Atlas Coal Mine was an integral part of the coal industry in the Drumheller region. The Atlas Coal Mine Company established its third mine (Atlas No. 3 Coal Mine) near East Coulee along the south bank of the Red Deer River in 1936.







Birds at Kinbrook Island Provincial Park



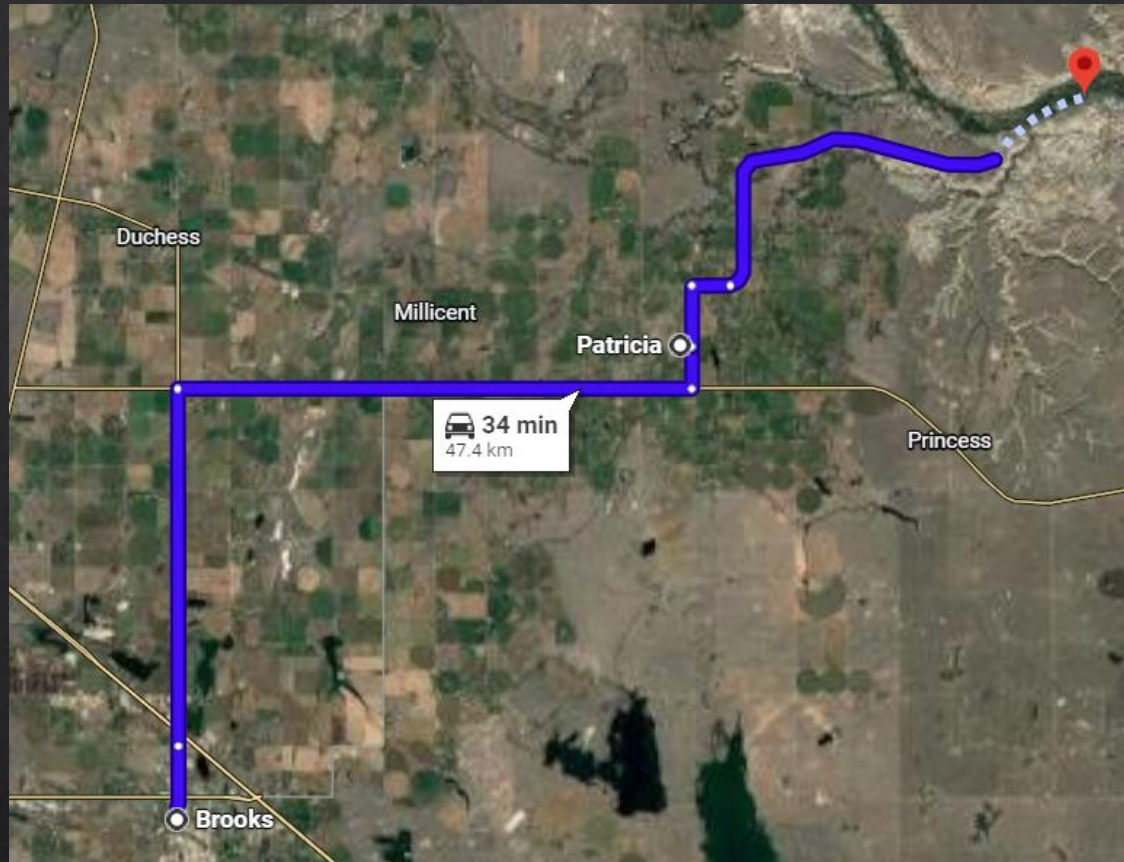








Drove from Brooks to Dinosaur Provincial Park



Dinosaur Provincial Park



- ◇ UNESCO World Heritage Site status brings benefits like:
 - ◇ enhanced protection, stricter management,
 - ◇ international recognition, and
 - ◇ resources for managing threats like illegal fossil removal and nearby oil/gas activities
- ◇ Public access to sensitive fossil-bearing areas is strictly managed to preserve resources
- ◇ Not allowed to tip the guides
- ◇ Taking dinosaur bones from Dinosaur Provincial Park carries severe penalties including fines up to \$50,000 and a year in prison

Dinosaur Provincial Park Sunset Photography Tour



This is Jessica, in charge of all of the guides and education in the park. She doesn't do tours anymore, but when she has a chance, she does the Sunset Photography Tour as it is her favourite. She was responsible for adding in a date specifically for us after we emailed her lamenting the fact that there was no tour on the dates we were there.

“The Lonely Man”





“Mushroom” Formations









“The Castle”









“The Thumb”





“The Valley of the Moon”





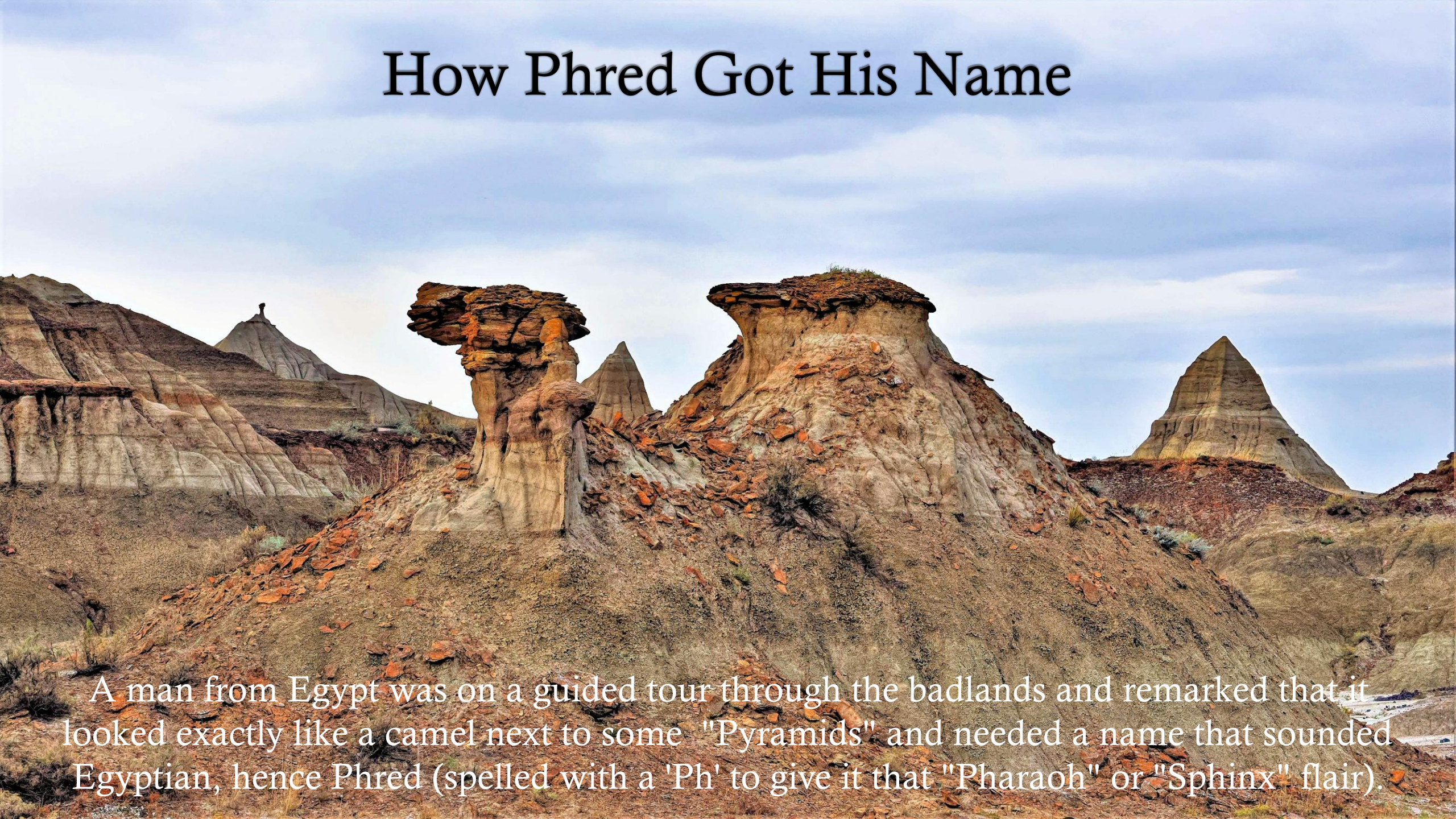




“Phred the Camel”



How Phred Got His Name

A landscape of badlands with unique rock formations. In the center, a prominent rock formation resembles a camel's head and neck, with a flat top and a long, curved neck. To the right, a pyramid-shaped rock formation is visible. The sky is blue with light clouds. The ground is rocky and sparsely vegetated.

A man from Egypt was on a guided tour through the badlands and remarked that it looked exactly like a camel next to some "Pyramids" and needed a name that sounded Egyptian, hence Phred (spelled with a 'Ph' to give it that "Pharaoh" or "Sphinx" flair).

Sunrise Over the Park



Dinosaur Provincial Park in Video

Amy



Fossil Display 2



Centrosaurus - the "horned dinosaur"

Species: *Centrosaurus apertus*
Family: Ceratopsidae
Found: Only in Alberta
Length: 6 metres (20 feet)
Weight: 2.4 metric tons

Centrosaurus looked much like our modern-day rhinoceros both in size and with an impressive nasal horn. The showy neck frill probably served to warn rivals and attract mates during courtship. *Centrosaurus* browsed in swampy forests using a beak equipped with efficient cutting blades for slicing through tough, fibrous plants. To support the great size and weight of the head, the first three neck vertebrae were fused into a solid piece of bone and rigged with massive neck and shoulder muscles.

Large carnivores could not always count on flooding events for easy scavenging on hundreds of carcasses. When they had to hunt their well-armed Ceratopsian prey, they may have cooperated together in pairs or even packs. To achieve any success, predators like *Albertosaurus* would likely try to sneak up on lone feeding *Centrosaurus* when they were spread out in search of food. Even then, it would have been a dangerous fight, since the *Centrosaurus*' nasal horn could inflict a severe goring.



Cottonwood Trail















Bonebed Walking Tour (Centrosaurus)





Centrosaurus



Bones lying out in the open. You are allowed to touch, and if they move you can pick them up, but you have to put them back where you found them.











Various markers, including metal posts, stakes, and remnants from old camps, are used to identify active fossil quarries, historical excavation sites, and research locations.



Atlas Vertebra - known as the "Counting Bone"



Every dinosaur has only one atlas bone at the very top of its spine.

In this valley, it is estimated that there are over 1000 Centrosaurus skeletons.

The high concentration of fossils is due to a massive "killing field" event, likely a flash flood, that trapped a massive herd of these horned dinosaurs.



Skin



Horn



Tooth



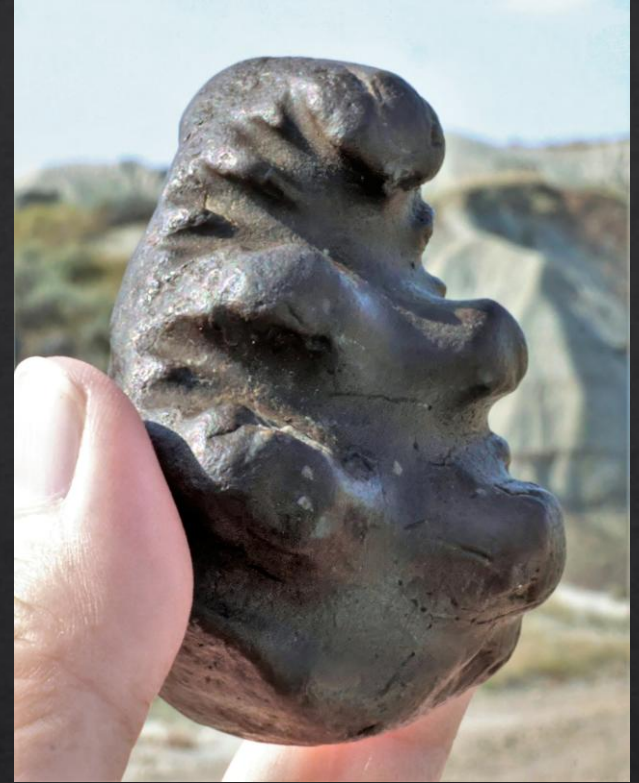
Frill



Bus Tour







This is an "Iniskim" in the Blackfoot language, or "Buffalo Stone" and is central to their culture. They are sections of fossilized ammonites, extinct marine mollusks that lived in the same era as the dinosaurs. When the fossil breaks apart, the segments naturally resemble a miniature buffalo or a sitting bear. They are considered "strong medicine" that gives owners power over buffalo and brings good fortune..

Corythosaurus the "Helmet Lizard"

Corythosaurus, a plant eater, travelled in herds through forests of magnolia, sycamore and redwood trees, browsing on the lush leaves and flowers of the understorey.

Their long, wide tails and mitten-like hands were helpful for swimming, possibly allowing them to escape into deep water from large carnivores.



Discovered by the Park's First Ranger

Charles M. Sternberg prepared this Corythosaurus skeleton in 1965 after it was discovered by Roy Fowler. It was preserved inside a huge block of sandstone that was removed from the sandstone ridge just 10 metres (33 feet) from this building.

What do the Bones Tell Us?

RIGHT LEG

The upper and lower parts of the right leg are still joined. They were buried before the flesh that held them together could rot.

LEFT LEG

Scattered bones of the left leg show that the dinosaur's left side was exposed and had time to decompose before burial.

TENDONS

Crosscrossing bony tendons strengthened the backbone and tail, making it easier for the animal to balance as it walked on hind legs.



BURIED IN A SANDY RIVER BOTTOM

Evidence in the rock layers tells us that the body was swept away by a deep swiftly-flowing river. The carcass was trapped and buried in a sand bar that turned into sandstone as the skeleton fossilized.



Meeting point of right and left nasal passages

Nostril

HEAD

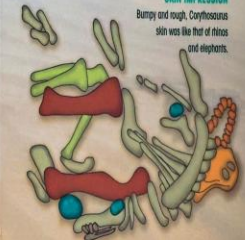
The skull of Corythosaurus sports a tall crest of expanded nasal bones. The hollow crest may have served as a resonating chamber for making loud bellowing and hoarse sounds for recognizing each other and attracting mates.

NECK

After death, ligaments and tendons in the neck tightened, pulling the head back toward the body.

SKIN IMPRESSION

Bumpy and rough, Corythosaurus skin was like that of tortoises and elephants.



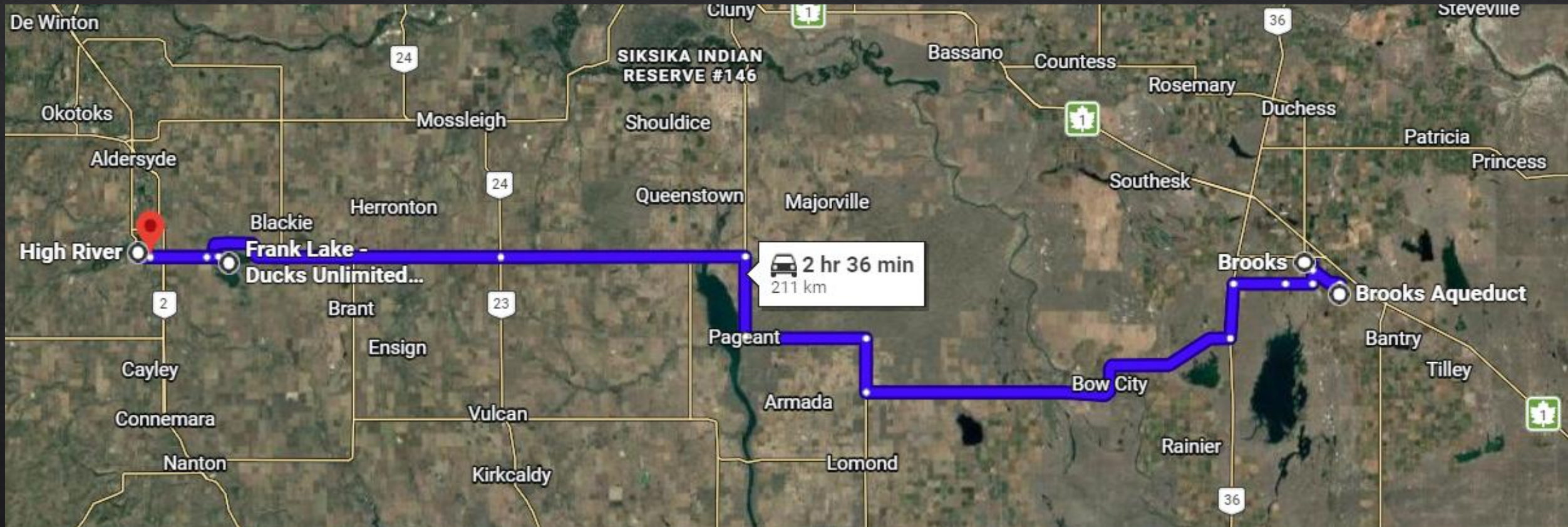


Dinosaur Provincial Park in Video

Debbie



Drove from Brooks to Frank Lake Wetlands with a Stop at Brooks Aqueduct



The Brooks Aqueduct was built between 1912 and 1914 as part of an irrigation system to provide water to the arid farmlands of southeastern Alberta

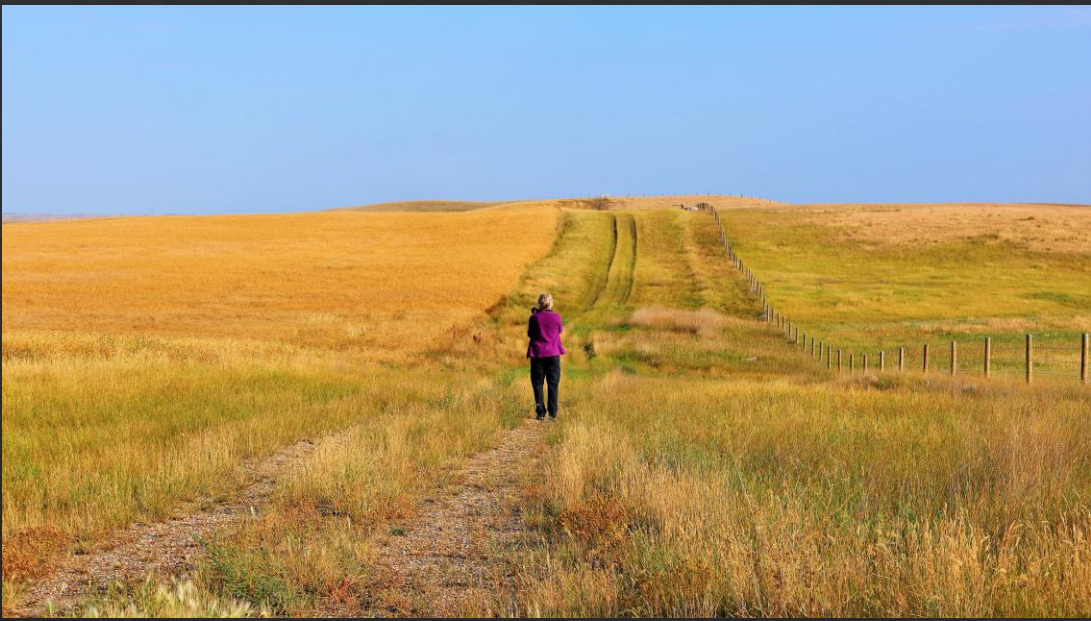








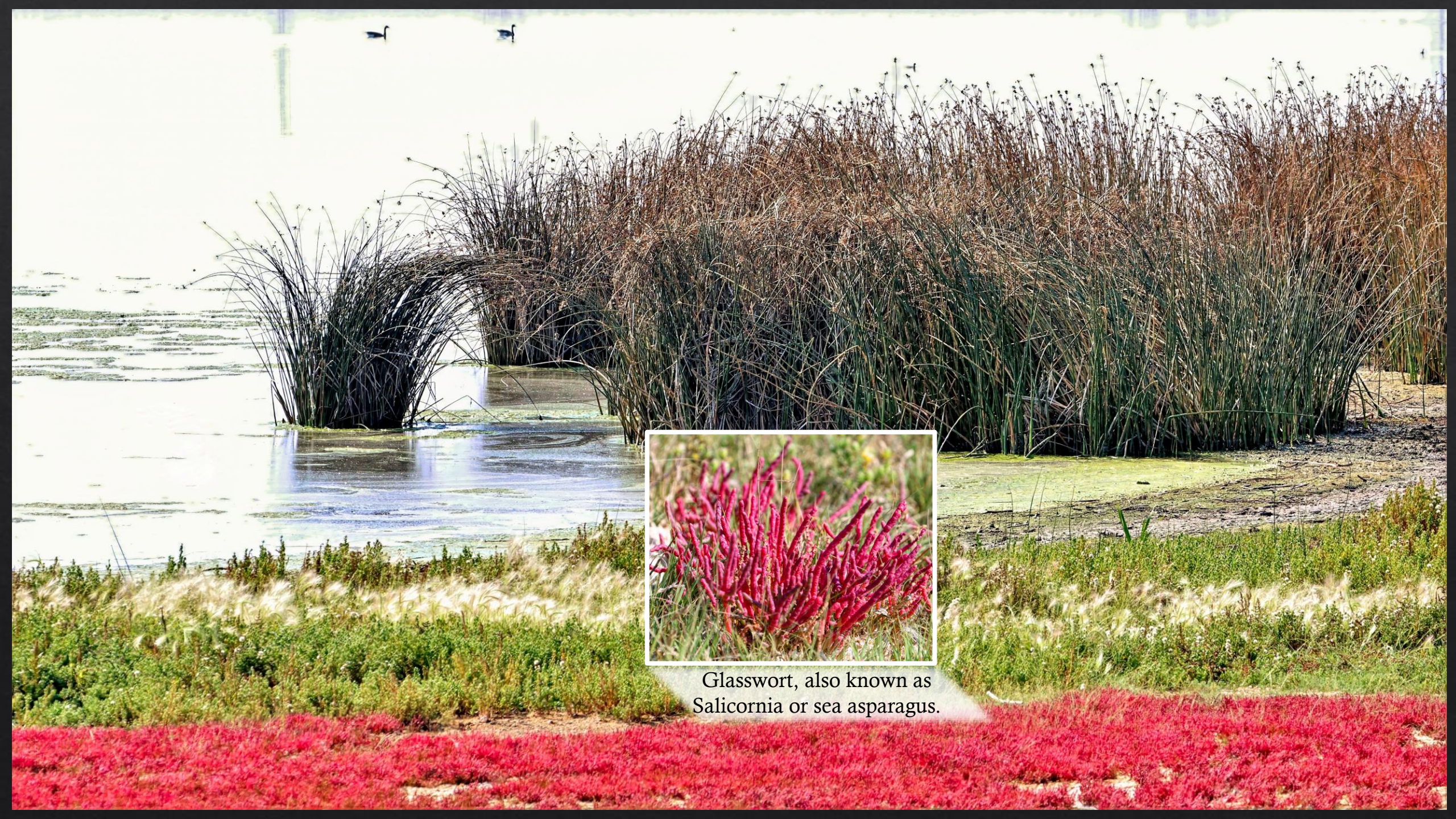






Frank Lake is a premier Important Bird Area restored and managed by Ducks Unlimited Canada. Covering 1,700+ acres, it is a critical habitat for over 150 species of birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and rare species like whooping cranes.





Glasswort, also known as Salicornia or sea asparagus.

















Jane's Video of the Trip

