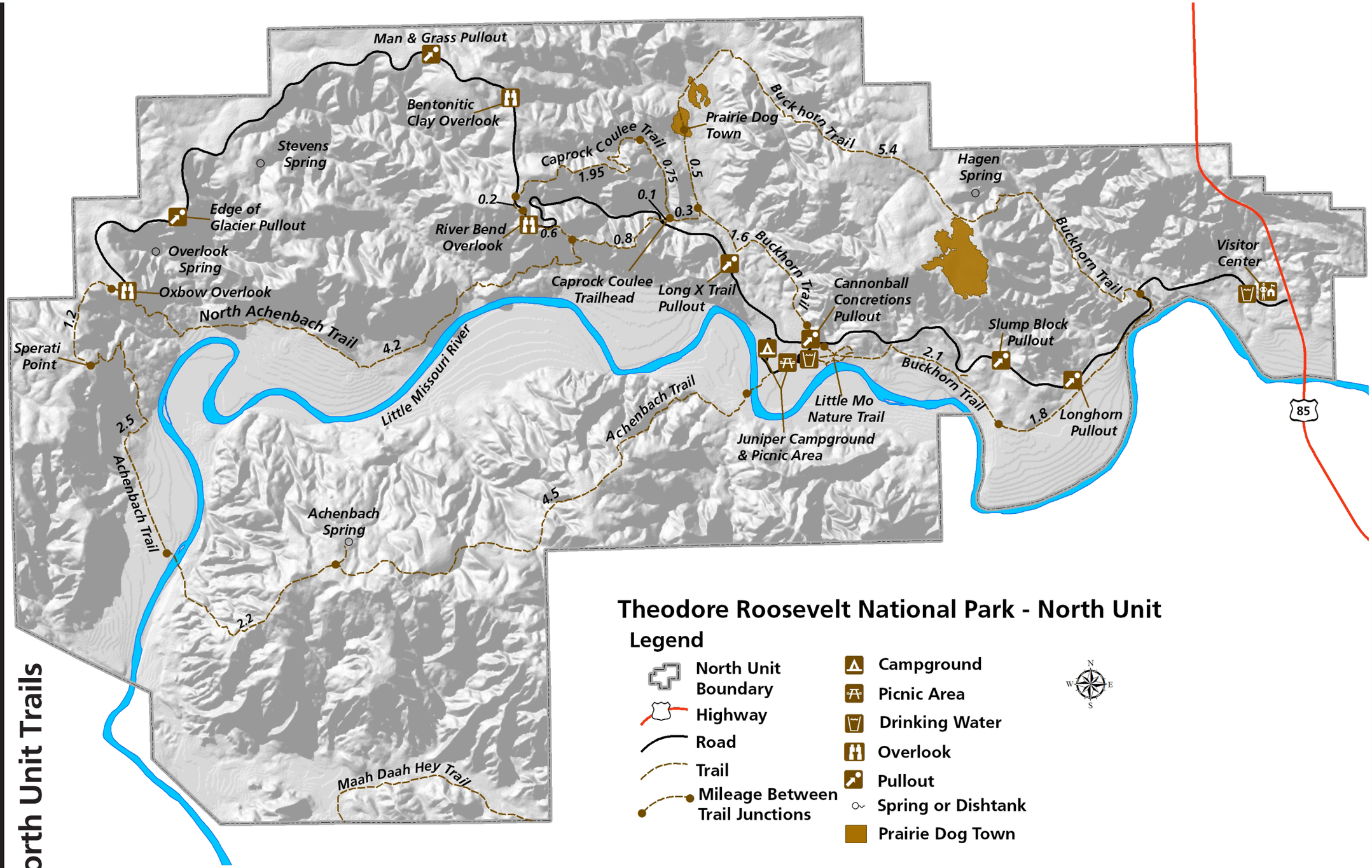
Theodore Roosevelt

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

North Unit Trails



Hiking Trails

Short trails focus on the area's natural history:

Little Mo
.7 mi/1 km, 20 min
Paved trail. Wheelchair accessible.
The trail explores the river bottom ecosystem. Trail brochure available.

1.1mi/2km, 30 min
The outer loop traverses badlands topography.

Caprock Coulee
1.5 mi/3km, 1 hour
The trail travels through badlands terrain and dry washes. Trail brochure available.

Prairie Dog Town
1.5 mi/3km, 1 hour
An easy walk leads to a prairie dog town.

Sperati Point
1.5 mi/3 km, 1 hour
A gently rolling walk leads to an overlook of the river.

Over 40 miles of interconnecting trails present hikers with spectacular badlands scenery. Some of the more common routes are described below. Trails traverse a mixture of river bottom and grassy buttes with some trails requiring steep climbs or descents. Water sources are unreliable; carry all that you anticipate needing. Trails are marked with wooden posts with signs at intersections.

Achenbach Loop
18mi/30km, overnight hike
This is a strenuous backpack trip with two river crossings. There are no foot bridges. The river can be impassable during high water. Please inquire at the visitor center before attempting to cross the river. The trail traverses the Achenbach Hills and through rugged canyons. There are several elevation gains and losses. The route crosses the heart of the Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness. Plan to camp at least one night. The Achenbach spring, located 4.5mi/7km from Juniper Campground, provides water for wildlife. Approach springs with caution as wildlife may be present. Any water obtained from backcountry sources must be purified before using.

South Achenbach
10.4mi/17km, 6-8 hours one-way
This strenuous hike can begin at Juniper Campground or the Oxbow Overlook. There are two river crossings with no foot bridges. The trail crosses deep coulees and grassy buttes. Several elevation gains and losses make this hike challenging.

North Achenbach
5mi/8km, 3-4 hours one-way
Begin this hike at the Caprock Coulee trailhead or the Oxbow Overlook. The trail follows the river and along the cliffs. This trail offers the best opportunity to view bighorn sheep.

Buckhorn
11.4mi/18km, 6-8 hours round trip or overnight
The trail begins at the Cannonball Concretions pullout. The trail traverses sagebrush terraces and a prairie dog town. After crossing Squaw Creek, the trail ascends to the top of a grassy butte then through a second prairie dog town. Next, it descends through a deep canyon. The trail meets and then parallels the park road before cutting through a sagebrush flat and continuing toward Juniper Campground and intersecting with the Little Mo Nature Trail before returning to Cannonball Concretions pullout.

Caprock Coulee
4.3mi/7km, 2-3 hours round trip
The first .75 mile of this trail is a self-guiding nature trail. Then, the trail becomes more strenuous as it climbs to the top of a grassy butte and intersects the park road. From Riverbend Overlook pullout, the trail parallels the road before following a ridgeline above the river. From the intersection with the North Achenbach Trail, the route descends down a north facing slope back to the trailhead.

Backcountry Regulations

Use Leave No Trace principles when hiking or camping in the backcountry.

Free permits are required for all overnight stays in the backcountry and can be obtained at the visitor center.

Backcountry camping is limited to 14 days. There are no designated backcountry campsites. Camps must be at least 1/4 mile from any road or trailhead, not visible from roads or trails, and 200 feet from any water source.

Bury human waste in a hole 6-8 inches deep and at least 200 feet away from any water source. Pack out all toilet paper.

Open fires are not permitted in the backcountry. Gas fueled cooking stoves can be used but may be restricted during times of high fire danger.

Water is limited. Plan to carry in all of your water. Springs may be found in the backcountry but all water must be purified.

Pack it in, pack it out. All trash must be packed out including toilet paper.

Pets, bicycles, motorized vehicles and equipment are prohibited in the backcountry.

All plants, animals, natural and cultural features are protected. Do not disturb or remove them. Collecting of any kind is prohibited.

Firearms must be out of sight, unloaded, and rendered inoperable. Fireworks are prohibited.

Protect Yourself
Drink at least one gallon of water each day.

Carry a topo map, adequate clothing, and a flashlight.

Crosscountry travel is permitted but can be difficult without a map.

Remain in one place if you become lost or separated from a group.

Park animals are wild. Never approach bison. If you meet bison on the trail, give them the right-of-way. Watch for rattlesnakes and ticks.

Keep an eye on the weather. Rain can cause the trails to become extremely slick or impassable.

Wear proper footwear. The terrain is uneven and rocky and will become slippery when wet or icy.

River crossings can be hazardous during high water. Check at the visitor center before attempting crossings and to get the latest information about the river depth.

Protect Your Park
Pets are not permitted on hiking trails.

Vehicles and bikes must stay on roads.

Horseback travel is not permitted on the Little Mo and Caprock Coulee Nature Trails.

Horses are not permitted in the Juniper Campground. Check at the visitor center for camping options.

For more information:
Theodore Roosevelt National Park
208 Scenic Drive
Watford City, ND 58854
(701) 842-2333
www.nps.gov/thro