



Information and Hiking Guide

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Information & Lost and Found
(701) 623-4466

Website
www.nps.gov/thro

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Welcome to Your National Park

Are you a nature enthusiast, a lover of history, or an adventurer? Perhaps you're a student, a hiker, or a geology buff. Do you love unspoiled badlands scenery and prairie sunsets?

Maybe you're looking for a bird to add to your life list or a wilderness trail to explore. Whoever you are, Theodore Roosevelt National Park has something for you.

Plan Your Visit

2 HOURS

- Take the scenic drive.
- Hike a short trail to an overlook.
- Do some wildlife watching.
- Attend a short ranger program.
- Tour the Maltese Cross Cabin in the South Unit.
- Watch the park film.

HALF DAY

- Pack a lunch and have a picnic.
- Visit Petrified Forest or Painted Canyon, both in the South Unit.
- Hike one moderate or many short trails.
- Attend more than one ranger program.

FULL DAY

- Bike some of the scenic drive.
- Hike a strenuous trail.
- Visit the Elkhorn Ranch.
- Explore the backcountry.
- Find a scenic spot to watch the sunset.
- Camp in a campground or the backcountry.



ACCESSIBILITY

Park buildings are wheelchair accessible. The park film is captioned and audio described. A braille brochure is available upon request. Accessible trails are listed on the following page. With the exception of guided hikes, all ranger-led programs are wheelchair accessible.



CAMPGROUNDS

All sites in Juniper and half the sites in Cottonwood are on a first come, first served basis. Some sites are large enough to accommodate large RVs but there are no utility hookups. Reservations (Cottonwood only) at www.recreation.gov at least 5 days in advance.



SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are welcome in all areas of the park. Please do your best to maintain extra distance between your service animal and any wildlife you encounter. Bison and horses are known to act aggressively towards dogs.



WILDLIFE SAFETY

Getting too close to animals, especially bison and horses, can cause injury or death. If your presence changes an animal's behavior, you are too close!

Respect wildlife and other visitors by watching all animals from a distance of 25 yards or greater.

Plan Your Visit (continued)



PICNIC AREAS

Shaded or covered picnic areas are available adjacent to the campgrounds in both the North and South Units. These facilities have restrooms, picnic tables, fire grates, and trash containers.



PETS

Pets must always be leashed and attended, and may walk on sidewalks, roads, and in parking lots and campgrounds. Please clean up after your pet. **Pets are not allowed in buildings, on trails, or in the backcountry.**



BICYCLING

Bicycles are permitted only on roads. The rules of the road apply to cyclists. Bicycles are not allowed on trails, including sections of the Maah Daah Hey Trail that lie within park boundaries.



HORSEBACK RIDING

Backcountry trails throughout the park are open to horseback riding. Stock are prohibited on nature trails and in all campgrounds except Roundup Horse Camp.

News and Events

Photo Contest

Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association (TRNHA) hosts an annual contest for pictures taken in the park. All photos submitted have a chance of being used in publications, exhibits, and on social media. The winners are featured in a calendar sold in TRNHA bookstores. For official rules visit www.trnha.org

Be a Junior Ranger

Pick up a free Junior Ranger activity book at the nearest visitor center. Share your answers with a park ranger to earn a Junior Ranger badge.

Attention 4th Graders!

All US 4th graders can earn a *free* **Every Kid in a Park Pass** allowing them and their family members free entrance to all national parks. To obtain a pass, fourth graders must complete a simple activity at www.everykidinapark.gov, print off a voucher, and bring it to a national park.

Starry Nights

The North Unit hosts an annual Star Party and the South Unit offers ranger-led sky tours and full moon hikes as well as the annual Dakota Nights Astronomy Festival. See website for details.

Important Regulations

KNOW THE LAW

National parks have special rules in place to help protect park resources. Some of the most important regulations are listed here. A complete listing can be found in the Management section of our website. Thank you for your efforts to preserve the park's wildness and beauty.

DRONES

The National Park Service has determined that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) can influence wildlife behavior and pose a safety risk to the landscape, wildlife, and park visitors. UAVs, including drones and other flying toys, cannot be operated by the public within a national park.

COLLECTING OR DEFACING

Help keep the park beautiful so everyone can enjoy it. Natural features of the park are protected including wildlife, plants, artifacts, rocks, soil, bones, and shed antlers. Collecting or possessing these items is illegal, as is graffiti and carving on rocks or wood.

FIREARMS

You must comply with all applicable firearms laws. If you can legally possess firearms under local, North Dakota, and federal laws, you may do so in this park. Federal law prohibits firearms in park buildings and facilities and prohibits discharging a firearm inside a national park.

Short Hiking Trails - South Unit

The trails listed below are well marked—you do not need a map to hike them. All other trails require navigating by map and compass. For trailhead locations, consult the maps in the park brochure. Distances shown are round-trip. Carry and drink plenty of water.



Painted Canyon Overlook 0.2 mile

A sidewalk traces the rim of the badlands behind the Painted Canyon Visitor Center.



Buck Hill 0.2 mile

A steep path with stairs leads to the second highest point in the park with stunning views in all directions.

Wind Canyon Trail 0.4 mile

A short hike along a cliff edge above the Little Missouri River, popular for sunset viewing.

Coal Vein Trail 0.8 mile

A brochure (available at trailhead) provides information about the geologic processes at work in the badlands. Occasional stairs.

Painted Canyon Nature Trail 1 mile

A trek from the top of the badlands to the bottom and back up again with a variety of geologic features.



Boicourt Trail 0.3 mile

A gentle gravel path atop the prairie renowned for its views of the South Unit's rolling terrain.



Skyline Vista 0.3 mile

An easy paved walk along a high plateau to a vista with benches to enjoy the view.

Ridgeline Nature Trail 0.6 mile

A brochure (available at trailhead) provides information about badlands flora and fauna along this moderate nature trail. Steep stairs.

Old East Entrance 0.8 mile

The trail to the park's original entrance station goes through a prairie dog town. The building is closed and locked at all times.

Petrified Forest 3 miles

A wilderness trail leads to a large concentration of petrified tree stumps. Directions to the trailhead are below.

Directions to the Petrified Forest Trailhead

The Petrified Forest is located in the Theodore Roosevelt Wilderness in the park's South Unit. The fossilized trees lie in two separate areas, both about 1.5 miles from the parking area. (**Round trip is about 3 miles.**)

This popular hike involves several short but steep climbs which are very slick and sometimes impassible when wet. Hiking during dry weather is best but be advised—there is no shade along this trail. Carry water and wear sun protection.

PLEASE NOTE: If you continue beyond the Petrified Forest, the loop trail is 10.5 miles long and requires a map, compass, and extra water and supplies.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS: From Medora, the drive to the Petrified Forest is 30 minutes on gravel roads. Ask about road conditions at the visitor center.

- Take I-94 westbound to exit 23. At the end of the exit ramp, turn right on Forest Service Road 730. Travel 2.7 miles.
- Turn left to stay on 730. Travel 2.5 miles. You will pass a "Private Road" sign; you can continue.
- Turn right on Road 730-2. In 150 yards, take the first left.
- At the next "Y", veer left, continue 0.6 miles to the parking area.
- The trail starts at the lift gate behind the trailhead sign.

Short Hiking Trails - North Unit

The trails listed below are well marked—you do not need a map to hike them. All other trails require navigating by map and compass. For trailhead locations, consult the maps in the park brochure. Distances shown are round-trip. Carry and drink plenty of water.

 **River Bend Overlook** 0.1 mile
A gravel path to a viewing deck of one of the park's most iconic views. A gentle trail with stairs leads from the viewing deck down to the CCC-built overlook shelter (0.2 mile).

 **Little Mo Nature Trail** 0.7 mile (short loop)
A trail brochure (available at trailhead) accompanies this easy, paved nature trail along the Little Missouri River.

Prairie Dog Town 2 miles
An easy walk on the Buckhorn Trail leads to a bustling prairie dog town. Start at the Caprock Coulee trailhead.

Caprock Coulee Nature Trail 1.4 miles
A trail brochure (available at trailhead) serves as a guide to the plants and geology found along the trail in a shady coulee.

 **Oxbow Overlook** 0.1 mile
A short, paved path along the rim of the badlands with sweeping views of the Little Missouri River and distant Achenbach Hills.

Little Mo Nature Trail 1.4 miles (long loop)
An extension off the paved short loop (see above) climbs the river terrace and later rejoins the paved nature trail.

Sperati Point 2 miles
From Oxbow Overlook, follow the South Achenbach Trail across rolling prairie to a slight hilltop with expansive views.

Caprock Coulee Trail (loop) 2 miles
A moderately strenuous trail (includes the Caprock Coulee Nature Trail) explores coulees, prairie, and juniper forests.

Backcountry Trails

Trails not listed as short hiking trails are considered **backcountry trails**. They can be difficult to follow. For short, out-and-back trips, turn around if feel you have lost the trail. Longer routes require a topographic map for navigation. **Maps in the park brochure are not detailed enough for backcountry trail navigation.** Dispersed camping is allowed with a free permit, available in park visitor centers.

Heat and Dehydration

Dehydration and heat exhaustion are common hazards, even on short trails. Carry and drink plenty of water—at least one gallon per person, per day. In the summer, avoid hiking during the hottest part of the day. Shade is hard to find, so wear a hat and sunscreen.

Visiting the Elkhorn Ranch Unit

Though it is the smallest unit of the park, the Elkhorn Ranch Unit is perhaps the park's most historically significant area.

Roosevelt chose the location because he wanted a remote setting for his "home ranch." Even today, the Elkhorn is still very remote, accessed only by gravel roads. Maps and

driving directions are available in all park visitor centers.

The cabin's foundation stones are all that remain of Roosevelt's ranching operation. The cabin site is 0.75 mile from the parking lot on an easy, mostly flat trail.

Ranger Programs

Ranger-led programs are wheelchair accessible with the exception of some guided hikes. Program schedules are posted throughout the park and online.

In the South Unit, a variety of ranger-led programs are offered daily, June through mid-September. Programs include guided hikes,

geology talks, tours of Theodore Roosevelt's Maltese Cross Cabin, campground evening programs, and special programs on occasion.

In the North Unit campground evening programs are presented on weekends, June through August.

Your Fee Money

Federal law requires parks to use recreation fees in ways that directly benefit you, the visitor. The following are some of the many projects funded by entrance and camping fees:

- New restrooms along the South Unit scenic drive
- Outdoor trail information signs and interpretive exhibits
- Ranger-led evening programs
- Routine campground maintenance
- A study of bison DNA to guide management of Department of the Interior bison herds
- Restoration of the River Bend Overlook Shelter
- Repaving the Little Mo Nature Trail
- Publications *like this one!*

Supporting Our Parks

Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association

Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association is a nonprofit cooperating association working in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in North Dakota. TRNHA operates five bookstores located in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, and Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge. Proceeds from store and online sales, memberships, and donations support NPS and USFWS programs. www.trnha.org

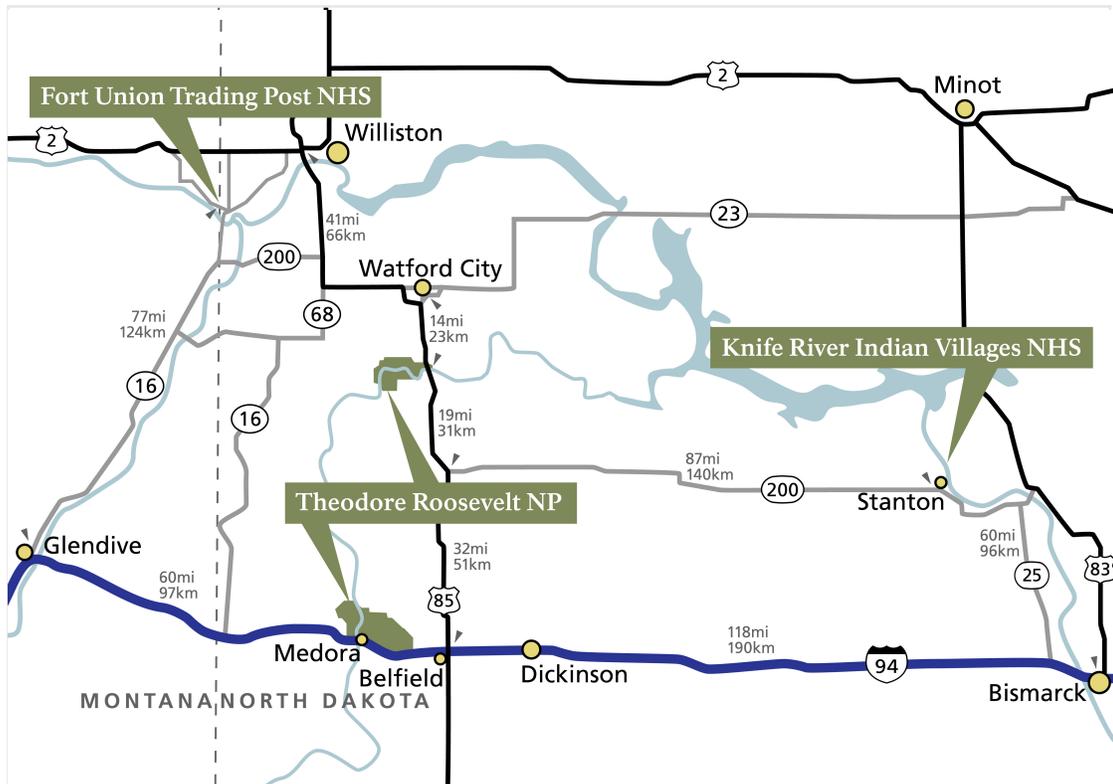


Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park

The mission of the Friends of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is to support the park at every level and deepen the human connection to the park. The Friends support the park by volunteering and fund-raising. Through their fund-raising efforts, the Friends seek to provide financing for research, educational activities, and park outreach. www.FriendsofTR.com



National Parks of North Dakota



Knife River Indian Villages NHS

564 County Road 37
Stanton, North Dakota 58571

Phone: 701-745-3300

Website: www.nps.gov/knri
Find us on Facebook

Fort Union Trading Post NHS

15550 Highway 1804
Williston, North Dakota 58801

Phone: 701-572-9083

Website: www.nps.gov/fous
Find us on Facebook and Twitter

Bookstore & Cooperating Association:
www.FortUnionTP.org

Parks open daily except
Thanksgiving, Christmas, and
New Year's Days.

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site

At **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site**, history comes alive. Visitors learn about Northern Great Plains Indian Culture as well as native plants and animals by touring the visitor center, museum, and reconstructed earthlodge. A 15-minute film describes life in an Indian village from the perspective of Buffalo Bird Woman, who lived at the Knife River Indian Villages. Several miles of hiking trails traverse the village sites and offer views of the Knife and Missouri Rivers.



Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

A trip to **Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site** takes you back to the mid-19th century, the heyday of Fort Union and the fur trade on the Upper Missouri River. From 1828 to 1867, Fort Union Trading Post was the most important fur trade fort on the Upper Missouri. Here, the Assiniboiné, Crow, Cree, Ojibway, Blackfeet, Hidatsa, and other tribes traded bison robes and other furs for goods such as cloth, guns, blankets, knives, cookware, and beads. Today, visitors can tour the reconstructed fort and museum as well as observe living-history demonstrations.

