

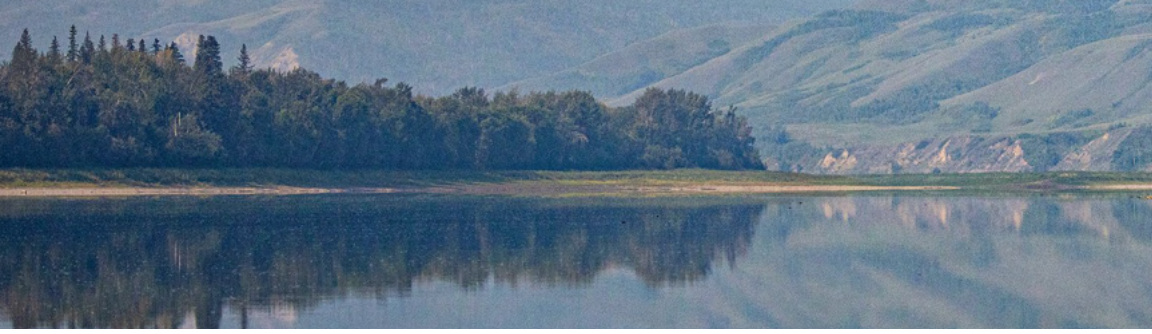


MIGHTYPEACE
TOURISM
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SMOKY RIVER MAP/GUIDE FOR RIVER TRAVEL





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mighty Peace Tourism acknowledges the homeland of the many diverse First Nations and Metis peoples whose ancestors have walked this land since time immemorial. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Treaty 8.

RIVER STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

As paddlers and boaters exploring the Smoky River, we pledge to leave no trace. Everything we bring in, we will pack out so that these rivers, beaches, and natural spaces remain pristine for everyone. By taking care of the river, we protect its beauty, wildlife, and the adventures yet to come.

USING THIS GUIDE

The information in this guide is only meant to be referenced while travelling on the Smoky River. It is important to use caution when boating or paddling on the Smoky River and all safety measures should be considered before departing. For those wishing to powerboat on the river, it is recommended to have an experienced driver that can “read” the water and navigate the waters to avoid any accidental mishaps.

Water levels on the Smoky River can change quite drastically. This fluctuation is due to precipitation, melting snow and glaciers in the Canadian Rockies which feed the Smoky River. Due to this, it is important to properly secure your boat or paddle equipment to shore in between stops or at the end of the day.

Weather conditions should always be monitored, as they too can change frequently when you are on the water. Be sure to carry clothing and supplies to meet every condition in case an emergency arises.



This river is excellent for canoeing and kayaking, but please use caution when paddling and paddle at your own risk. Be advised as the water levels change so do the rapids. Higher levels do not necessarily mean bigger rapids and the same goes for lower water levels. At times you can experience Class 4 Rapids on this river and at other times Class 1 Rapids. A Class 4 Rapid is a difficult, powerful, and long rapid that is considered advanced and requires technical skills to navigate. It features large powerful, and irregular waves, plus obstacles like strong hydraulics and dangerous rocks, requiring precise maneuvering. Advanced preparation and traveling in groups is highly recommended even for experienced paddlers.

It's worth noting that the Peace River Gold Cup is held on this river every year, and the World Jet Boat Championships take place every four years in mid-June around the Summer Solstice. These are sanctioned jet boat races, with boats reaching speeds of up to 260 km/h. For everyone's safety, the river is closed during these events. If you're planning to travel the river in mid-June, be sure to contact the Peace River Boating Association for the exact dates. The Smoky River is also a fantastic spot to watch the races—just make sure you're safely off the water while the action is underway.

In preparation for this guide, an experienced team travelled by jet boat covering over 100km and over 39 stops through four different municipalities. Each stop will include the km's, the location name, the municipality it resides in, and the GPS coordinates.

The river guide is meant to be used at your own risk and we, the authors and organizations who prepared this guide, assume no responsibility for any misuse of the information included here. By following the descriptions on the following pages, the users should be able to orient themselves to their location on the Smoky River and navigate their way through quite easily.

TIP: Always read the river as you go. Conditions can change, and no guide can replace good judgment and careful observation.

Have a wonderful trip!

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

All maps throughout the guide have been developed by Explore Inc. When planning a trip on the river the **Peace River Boating Association**, based out of the **Town of Peace River** is an excellent organization to contact if you need assistance in planning or prepping your river excursion. This committed group of locals are always eager to assist river enthusiasts in any way that they can. Known for organizing and supporting the **Peace River Gold Cup** jet boat race, this association is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to travelling on the scenic Smoky River.

Peace River Boating Association

prba2014@outlook.com

GUIDED TOURS

If you're looking to take to the river with a guide, then check out **Peace River Adventures**, a locally owned and operated business that specializes in guided jet boat and paddle tours on the incredible **Smoky River**. Choose from a wide range of tours or create your own – either way you're guaranteed to see stunning landscapes, tons of wildlife, and learn more about the history of the region. They also provide river paddle equipment rentals and shuttle services for adventurers who want to get out and see the sights for themselves.

Peace River Adventures

www.peacriveradventures.ca

THE COMMUNITIES FEATURED IN THIS GUIDE



BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

With the Smoky River to the east and the Peace River to the north, Birch Hills County draws people in from near and far with many year-round attractions, thrilling outdoor adventures, and experiences that cater to all ages and interests. Offering cultural events, picturesque landscapes, and amazing dining experiences, you will be able to completely enjoy yourself while visiting this area.



TOWN OF PEACE RIVER

Known for its exuberant and exciting community, the Town of Peace River is a hub of activity in the Mighty Peace. With fine dining options, one-of-a-kind attractions, colourful murals, a plethora of recreational activities, historical landmarks and locations, year-round events, and the beautiful Peace River flowing through the middle, this town is a favourite among many and is considered a must see.

NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

Full of history dating back to the Fur Trade, the Northern Sunrise County is home to important historical sites such as the 12 Foot Davis Gravesite, and historical farmhouses. You will be able to find exciting hiking trails here, plenty of playgrounds, community events such as the Peace River Pow Wow, plus all your favourite summer and winter recreational activities.



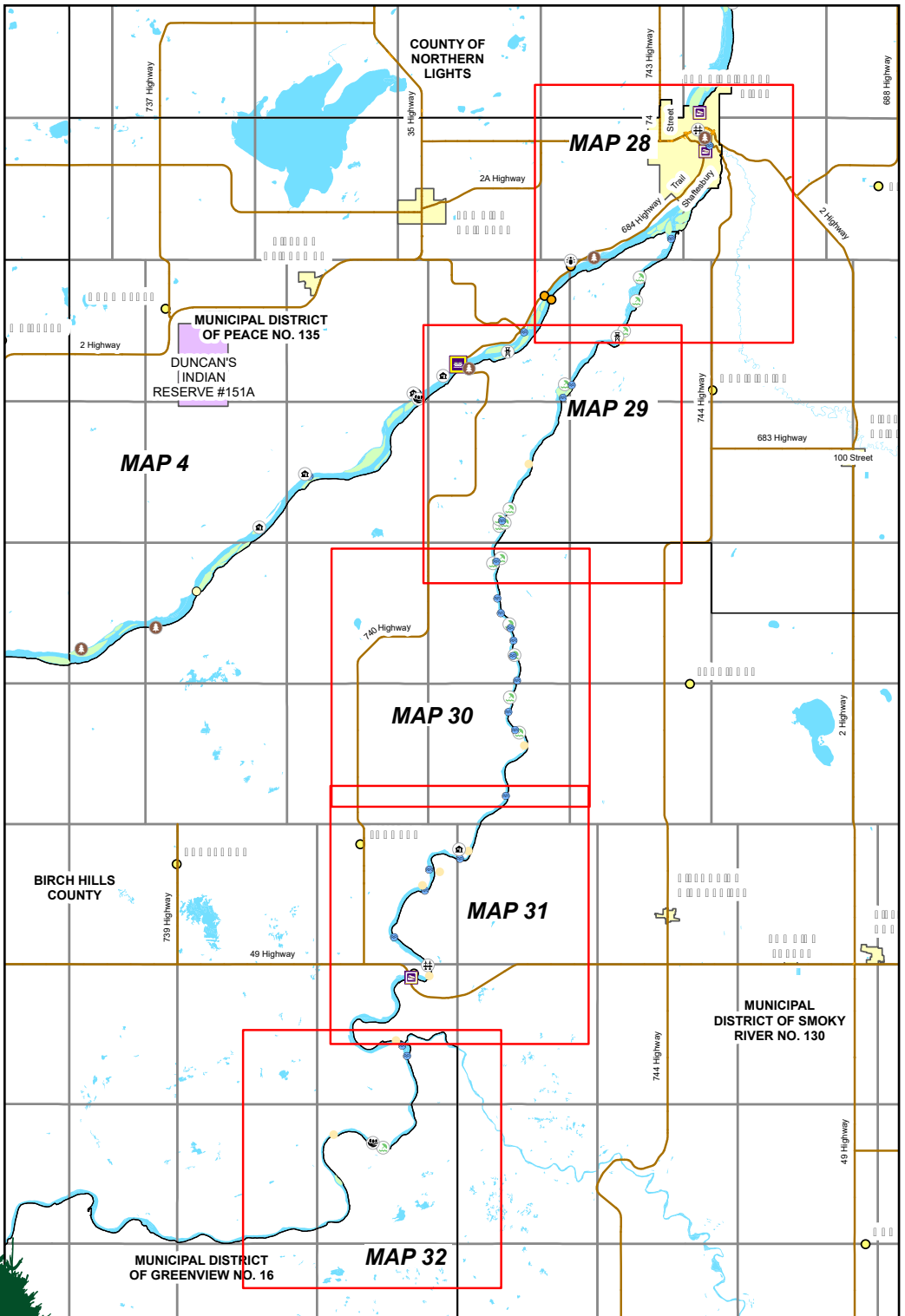
MD OF SMOKY RIVER

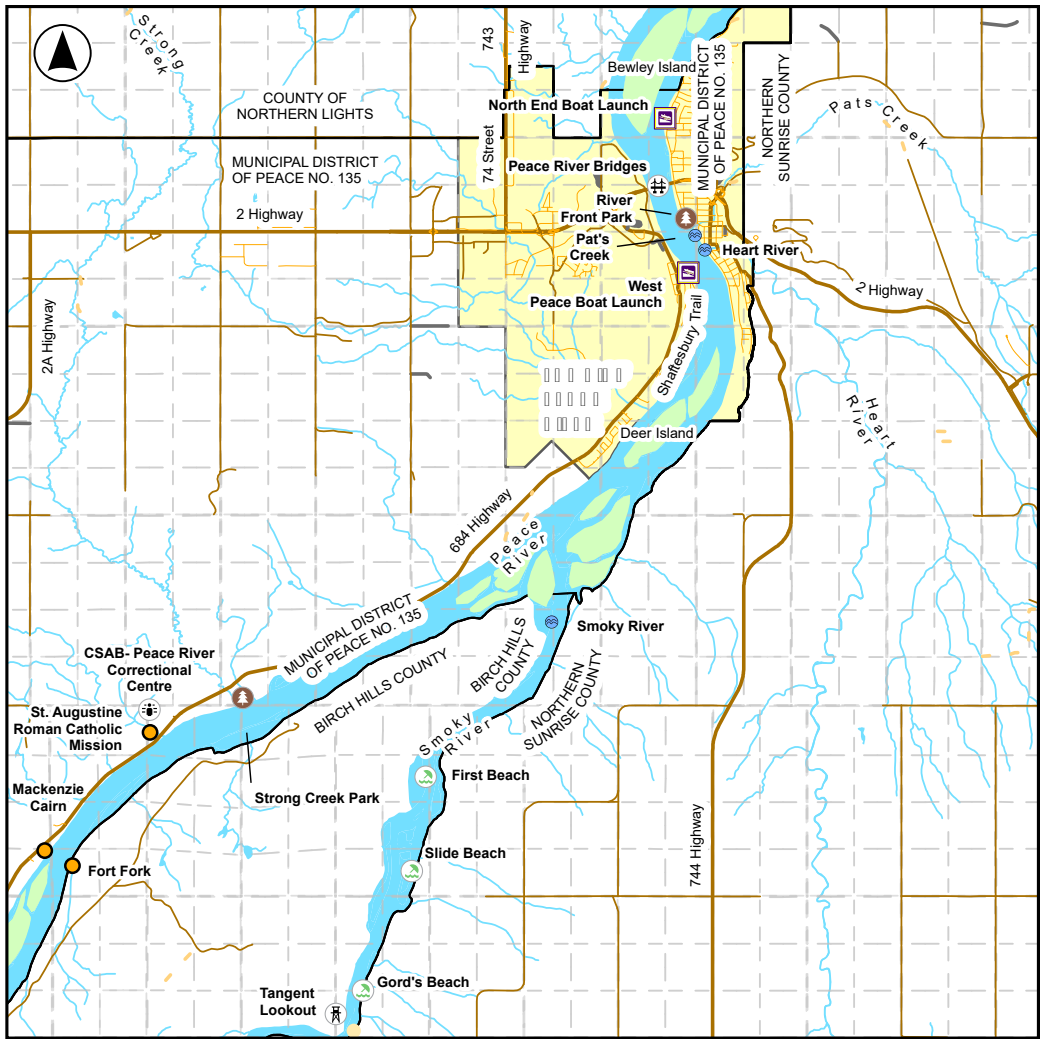
Home to pristine wilderness and big-sky beauty, the MD of Smoky River is where you will find some of Alberta's best hoodoos, the vibrant Falher Honey Fest, and unforgettable days on the river. It's also home to the Little Smoky Ski Hill and a rich Francophone culture throughout the county that adds depth, flavour, and charm to every visit.

MD OF PEACE

The perfect place for a northwestern getaway, the MD of Peace has beautiful rolling hills, scenic lakes, and some of the best views of the river valley. With museums, parks, campgrounds, and the provincially known Shaftesbury Ferry, this section of the Mighty Peace is home to many events, activities, and areas to explore.









KM 0: THE PEACE AND SMOKY RIVER CONFLUENCE

MD OF PEACE ON WEST BANK OF THE PEACE RIVER, BIRCH HILLS IN THE MIDDLE AND NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY ON THE EAST SHORE

GPS Coordinates: N56° 11.379' W117° 19.933'

Sagitawa is the Cree word for “*where the rivers meet,*” a fitting name for this naturally beautiful confluence. This spot is also accessible through mixed-use trails within the Peace River Wildland Provincial Park, this spot opens up to a wide sandy beach that shifts with the seasons, sometimes revealing calm back channels perfect for wading or exploring. There is also rocky section here that is a great spot for rock hounding, with unique rocks exposed by changing water levels. It is a lovely spot to spend the day and very close to the Town of Peace River.

KM 5.5: FIRST BEACH, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 08.920' W117° 22.111'

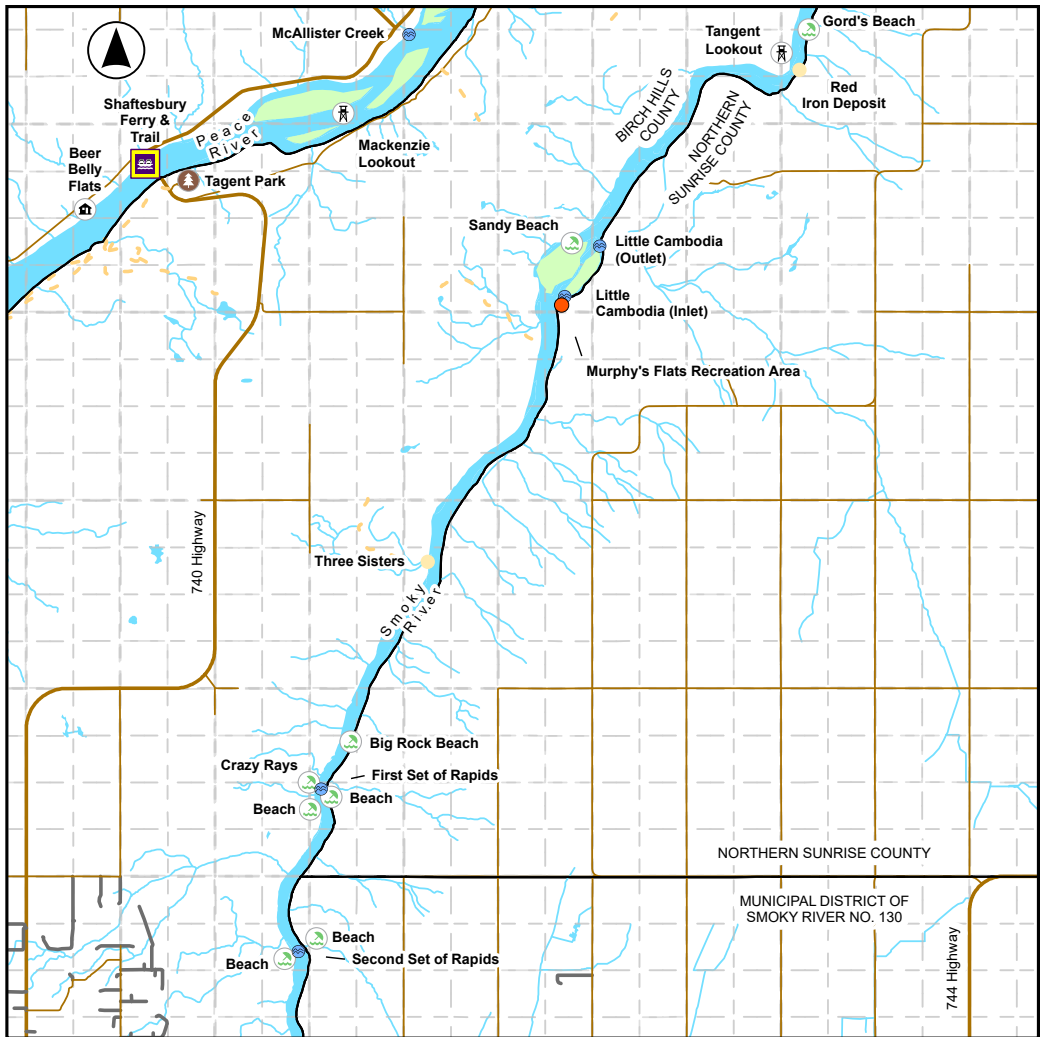
This riverside spot transforms with the water levels—sometimes a sandy beach, other times a walkable island you can explore end to end. It features both soft sand and rocky stretches, offering plenty of variety for paddlers and boaters looking to stretch their legs. With its open space and natural shelter, it’s also a great location for riverside camping and taking in the scenery.



KM 7.2: SLIDE BEACH, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 08.073' W117° 22.382'

Locally known as Slide Beach—named for a natural land slide visible across the river. This spot is perfect for camping or taking a break to stretch your legs. Depending on water levels, it offers sandy areas as well as rocky sections, and at times becomes a walkable island. It’s also a great place to find shelter from the wind, making it a comfortable stop for paddlers and boaters alike.





KM 10: GORD'S BEACH, RED IRON DEPOSIT & TANGENT LOOKOUT, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 06.768' W117° 23.239'

Locally known as Gord's Beach, named for a gentleman who owns a trapline and cabin on the opposite riverbank, this spot offers a mix of sandy and rocky beach areas and plenty of space to stretch your legs. While there are few trees for shade or shelter, the beach provides striking views, including a large red iron deposit on the riverbank. This vivid red coloration comes from iron-rich sandstone. As the river erodes the layers, oxygen from the air and water reacts with the iron minerals, creating the bright red and rusty hues visible today.

In the distance, you can spot a Wildland Provincial Park lookout, accessible via mixed-use trails. Visitors can reach it by crossing the Peace River using the Shaftesbury Ferry and following the trails through Peace River Wildland Provincial Park.

KM 15.9: LITTLE CAMBODIA OUTLET, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 05.057' W117° 26.678'

At times, this back channel is navigable by boat or paddle, though opportunities are rare and dependent on water levels.



KM 16.3: SANDY BEACH, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 05.023' W117° 27.099'

This island features a beautiful sandy beach and can be fully walked around when water levels allow. A large rocky section makes it a perfect spot for rock hounding. From here, you can enjoy views of Murphy Flats Recreation Area in Northern Sunrise County, which is accessible by road. Some areas of the island are shaded by clusters of trees, providing natural shelter and resting spots for paddlers and boaters.

KM 18: SOUTH END OF MURPHYS FLATS INLET TO LITTLE CAMBODIA, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 04.390' W117° 27.555'

Murphy Flats is a rare spot where docking your boat is possible, but it's not recommended for jet boats. It's an excellent starting point for a paddle adventure to the Town of Peace River, allowing you to bypass all the rapids from the outset. It's also a great stopping point for those paddling the Smoky River. Depending on your pace and style, the paddle can take 4-7 hours. This day use recreation area in Northern Sunrise County offers trails, picnic tables, free firewood, and washrooms, with convenient road access for visitors.



KM 23: THREE SISTERS, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 02.070' W117° 29.394'

The Three Sisters are named for three large rocks that rise from the river. Depending on water levels, they may be partially hidden or stand out prominently. While they make a striking sight, boaters and paddlers should give them a wide berth, as the current can be very strong in this area and there are multiple other rocks surrounding them.



KM 26.3: BIG ROCK BEACH, NORTHERN SUNRISE COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N56° 00.439' W117° 30.812'

This beach is named for the incredibly large rocks across the beach, creating a dramatic and scenic landscape. It features a sandy beach with massive rock formations, making it a great spot to stop, explore, or camp while enjoying views of the iconic Three Sisters in the river.



The rocks in this area tell a fascinating geological story. Many are shale, siltstone, or sandstone from the Smoky Group, which, when more resistant or cemented, form large angular blocks and ledges. Others are ironstone concretions or ooidal ironstone from the Bad Heart Formation—dense, iron-rich, and often reddish, giving parts of the shoreline a striking “rusty” appearance.

This beach displays post glacial boulders that can sometimes include quartzite, chert, and sandstone, transported and deposited by ancient rivers or glaciers. Making it a fascinating spot for paddlers, boaters, and rock hounding enthusiasts alike.



KM 27.6: CRAZY RAYS & 1ST SET OF RAPIDS, MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 59.868' W117° 31.310'

This site marks the first set of rapids as you move upstream on the Smoky River, with both sides of the river known as Crazy Rays, featuring nice beaches on each side. It is accessible via ATV trails and makes for a good spot for paddlers and boaters to stop and explore.

This stretch of river - named after a local boater who sank his jet boat here years ago—has a bit of a reputation. It also claimed a race boat from a Mexican team during the 2007 World Jet Boat Championships. Neither vessel was ever recovered.

That said, don't let these stories discourage you. Many paddlers and boaters travel through this area safely every year. It simply serves as a reminder of the importance of being well-prepared and informed about the river conditions before you head out.

Just north of this site is a location of paleontological significance. Local paddlers discovered Plesiosaur fossils nearby, which were later recovered by the Royal Tyrrell Museum with assistance from Peace River Adventures for river transportation.

Plesiosaurs were marine reptiles that lived from roughly 125 million years ago and found in the Shaftsbury formation. Fossils found in the Peace and Smoky River area, including vertebrae, ribs, and other bones preserved in marine sedimentary rocks, reveal that much of northwestern Alberta was once covered by a shallow sea, part of the great inland seaway that stretched across North America. Today, the riverbanks and rock outcrops in this area are rich in geological layers formed in those ancient seas, making this a fascinating spot for both geology lovers and fossil enthusiasts.

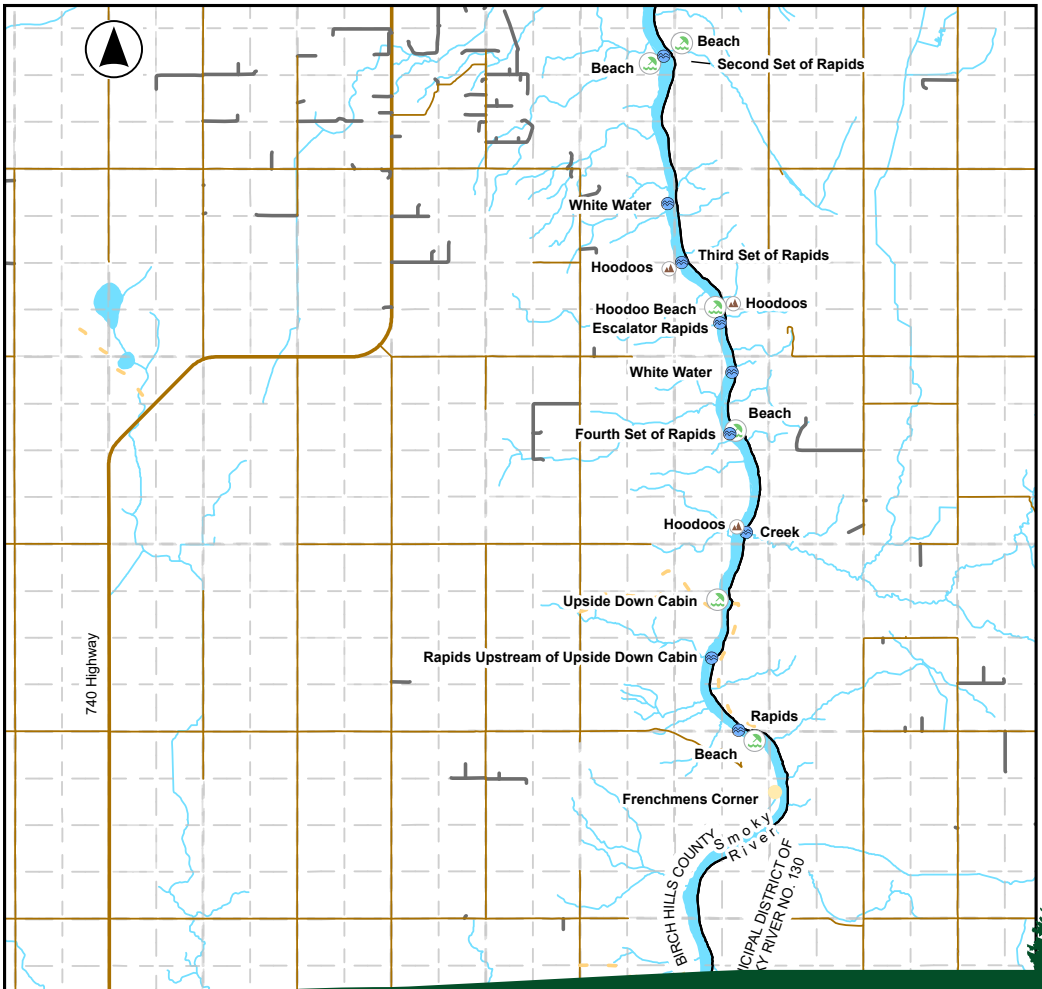


KM 30.3: SECOND SET OF RAPIDS, MD OF SMOKY RIVER & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 58.521' W117° 31.791'



This is where you'll encounter the second set of rapids on the Smoky River. Their difficulty can vary throughout the year, as water levels and seasonal conditions can change the classification of all rapids along the Smoky. Before heading out, it's a good idea to check current conditions with local organizations such as the Peace River Boating Association or Peace River Adventures. As with all rapids on the river, be mindful of the many rocks in the water, which require careful navigation. ATV trails lead down to the river here, and there are beaches on both sides, making it a convenient spot to stop, explore, or prepare for the next stretch of paddling or boating.





KM 33.4: WHITEWATER 33, MD OF SMOKY RIVER & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 57.058' W117° 31.501'

This is where you will hit a stretch of whitewater.

KM 34.4: THIRD SET OF RAPIDS & HOODOOS, MD OF SMOKY RIVER & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 56.499' W117° 31.364'

Here is where you will hit your third set of rapids—an exciting stretch of the Smoky that also opens up to some of the river’s most stunning hoodoos. As with all rapids on the river, be mindful of the many rocks in the water, which require careful navigation. Towering above both sides of the valley, these ancient sandstone formations have been shaped by centuries of wind and water, creating a rugged, otherworldly skyline along the cliffs.



Keep an eye on the east side: perched proudly on top of one of the tallest hoodoos is a Canadian flag. It was placed there by a local helicopter company known for their search-and-rescue work and wildfire support in the region. It is a striking reminder of the incredible beauty and spirit of this country.



KM 36: HOODOO BEACH, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 56.095' W117° 30.797'

Locals call this spot Hoodoo Beach, named for the beautiful hoodoos that rise across the river in the MD of Smoky River. The beach itself is pristine, stretching wide with soft sand and offering a perfect spot to relax or take a swim. The current near the shore is gentle, making it a safer spot to swim. Large rocks frame both ends of the beach, while a backdrop of trees provides natural shelter and shade, creating a peaceful spot along the river.

KM 36.3: ESCALATOR RAPIDS, MD SMOKY RIVER & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 55.938' W117° 30.727'

Here you will encounter yet another set of rapids, known locally as the Escalator Rapids due to the elevation drop in this section of the river. The current picks up speed as the water navigates around numerous large rocks, creating a dynamic stretch of river to navigate. It should be noted that these rapids are not always on the river depending on river flow. As with all rapids on the river, be mindful of the many rocks in the water, which require careful navigation.



KM 37: WHITEWATER 37, MD SMOKY RIVER & BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 55.478' W117° 30.527'

Here is where you will encounter another stretch of whitewater.

KM 37.75: FOURTH SET OF RAPIDS & BEACH, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 54.906' W117° 30.564'

Here you will reach your fourth set of rapids. Along this stretch, you will find another sandy beach, perfect for a rest stop or even an overnight camp. As with all rapids on the river, be mindful of the many rocks in the water, which require careful navigation.



KM 39.5: HOODOOS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 54.080' W117° 30.305'

Here you will encounter another stunning set of hoodoos rising dramatically on the west side of the river in Birch Hills County. These natural sandstone pillars, shaped over centuries by wind and water, create a striking, otherworldly landscape that's a highlight of the river journey. On the east side, you will notice a creek in Northern Sunrise County that can be accessed from the river, offering a quiet spot to explore or take a break.



KM 40.75: UPSIDE DOWN CABIN, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 53.404' W117° 30.632'

This is a fantastic spot to pause, explore, and take it all in. The name comes from a local story passed down over generations. Long ago, a small cabin once stood here until a powerful flood swept through and flipped it completely upside down. While no trace of the cabin remains today, the story lives on, and so does the name.

A beautiful sandy beach stretches along the river, framed by rocky outcrops on either side that invite climbing and exploration. Thoughtful locals have added an outhouse for visitors' convenience. If you use it, please leave it as you found it, or even better.

Although ATV trails do lead down to this area, please note that they cross private land and access is restricted. Respecting these boundaries helps ensure this special place remains accessible and cared for in the years to come.

KM 41: RAPIDS UPSTREAM OF UPSIDE DOWN CABIN, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 52.817' W117° 30.865'

Here you will encounter another set of rapids. Keep a close eye on the water, as numerous rocks are scattered throughout, making careful navigation essential.



KM 43.8: FIFTH SET OF RAPIDS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 52.082' W117° 30.167'

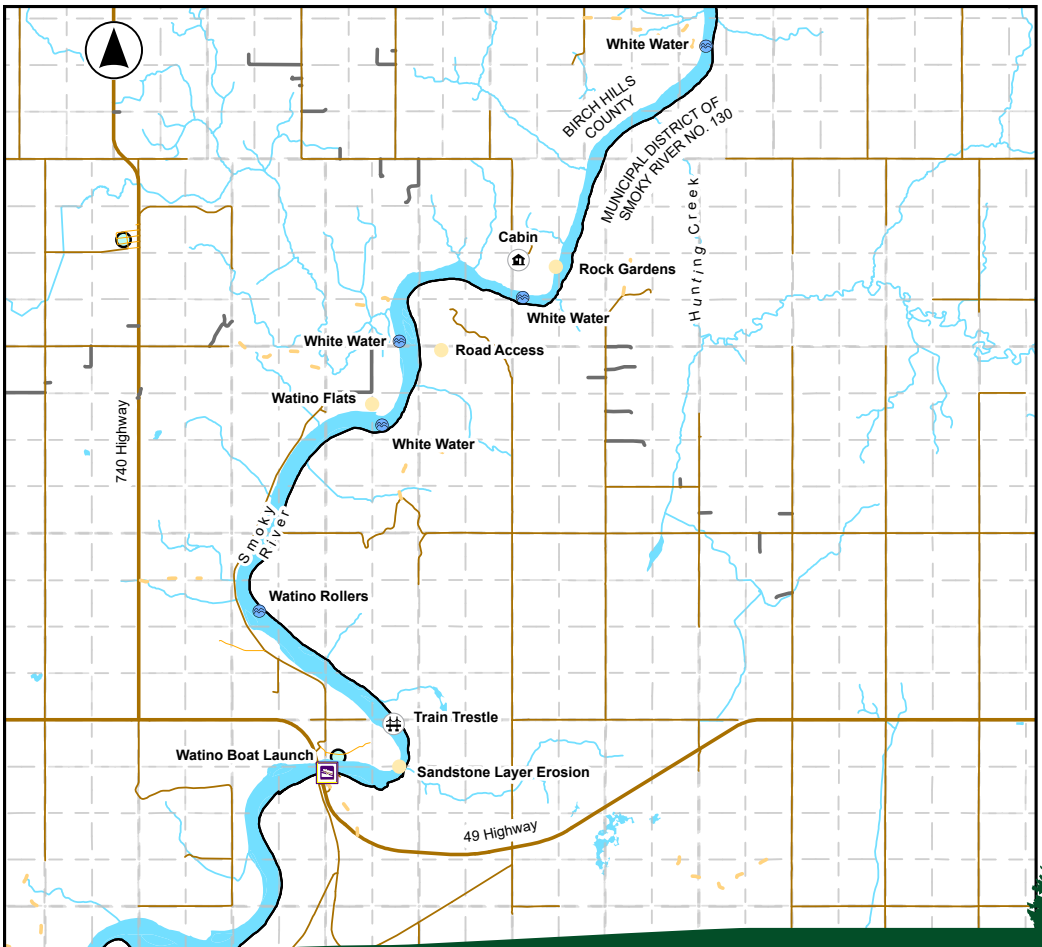
Here you will encounter the sharpest and fastest set of rapids on the river. The water flows with intensity, and numerous rocks make careful navigation a must. During the 2018 Peace River Gold Cup, race boat U204 *Miss Ede*—piloted by well-known Peace River racing team Darren Weaver and Felix Bergeron, sank here and still remains on the east side upstream of the rapids.

KM 45: FRENCHMEN'S CORNER, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 51.570' W117° 29.724'

The Peace and Smoky River region is home to a strong and vibrant Francophone community, with many families tracing their roots back to the early days of settlement in the area. Francophone culture and heritage continue to play an important role in shaping the region today. This location has been known locally as Frenchmen's Corner, a name that reflects its long history as a gathering place where Francophone families have traditionally spent time along the river.

This is another excellent spot to pause and enjoy the surroundings. The shoreline here is more rocky, offering a different riverside landscape to explore and appreciate. While ATV trails do lead down to this area, they cross private land, and permission is required before using them.



KM 49.3: WHITEWATER, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 49.691' W117° 31.030'

Here you will hit more white water.

KM 54: ROCK GARDENS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 47.613' W117° 33.493'

This section, known as the Rock Garden, truly lives up to its name. Here, the river is filled with large, jagged rocks—some rising prominently above the surface, while others lie hidden just below the water. Careful navigation and river reading are essential to safely pass through this stretch. Despite the obstacles, it's a strikingly beautiful part of the river, with scenery unlike any other section you will encounter.



KM 55: WHITEWATER, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 47.345' W117° 34.073'

Here you will pass more white water.





KM 55.8: WHITEWATER & CABIN UP ON THE HILL, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 47.476' W117° 34.755'

Here you will encounter more white water. On the west hill in Birch Hills County, you will notice a private cabin, mentioned here only as a point of reference.

KM 58.4: WHITEWATER, BIRCH HILLS & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 46.937' W117° 36.122'

Here you will encounter more white water, as well as road access on the MD of Smoky River side of the river.



KM 60: WHITEWATER & WATINO FLATS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 46.154' W117° 36.410'

Here you will encounter more whitewater before arriving at the Watino Flats. The area above the beach is private, with cabins and RVs on the property. You

are welcome to stop and enjoy the sandy and rocky beach along the river, but please respect the private land above it.

KM 64.5: WATINO ROLLERS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 44.415' W117° 38.499'

Here you will encounter the Watino Rollers. A name that perfectly captures this section of the river. On the east side, the water churns and swells, creating a dramatic, rolling stretch of river.



KM 67.6: WATINO TRAIN TRESSEL, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY & MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 43.388' W117° 36.278'

Here you will see the Watino Train Trestle, the former railway bridge spanning the Smoky River in the hamlet of Watino, Alberta. Originally built in 1915, the wooden structure was part of the Edmonton, Dunvegan & British Columbia Railway. It was later replaced with a steel span, but the line was eventually closed, and the bridge was demolished in the late 2000s.

While navigating this section of the river, stay beneath the portion of the bridge that still rises above the water. Be cautious, as part of the old structure lies just below the surface on the west side.



KM 67: SANDSTONE LAYER EROSION, MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 42.957' W117° 36.131'

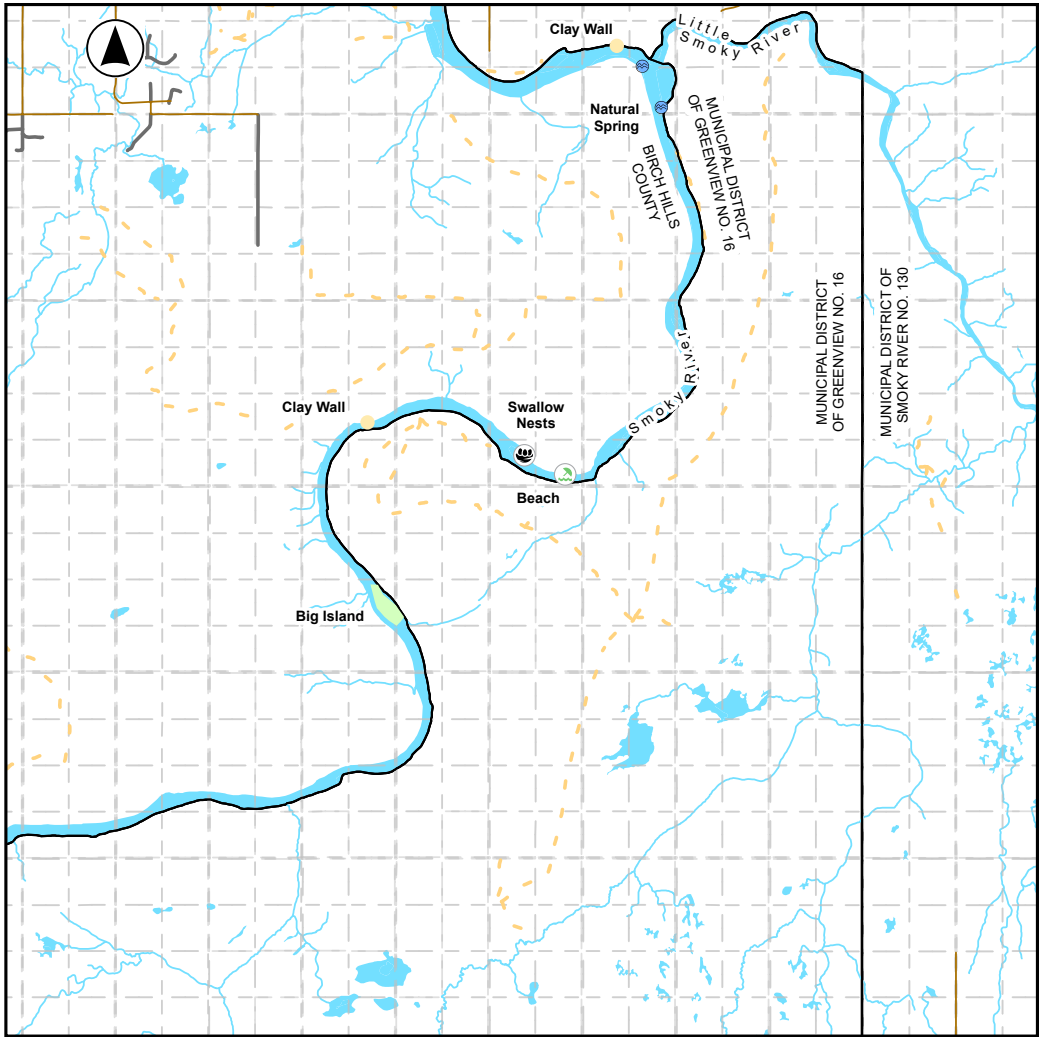
Here you will see a striking ledge of sandstone erosion on the east side of the river. This natural landmark is impossible to miss, with layers of sandstone. Wind, water, and time have sculpted the cliff. It's a remarkable feature of the Smoky River and a must-see for anyone navigating this section.

KM 69.5: WATINO BOAT LAUNCH, MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 42.923' W117° 37.309'

The Watino Boat Launch is located on the south side of the Smoky River, just across from the charming community of Watino and near the Smoky River Bridge on Highway 49. Here you can visit the Valley Bee Café a Francophone bee farm offering hands-on self-guided tours, an observation hive, honey extraction viewing, local artisan goods, and community tables for conversation. Fun for all ages, this unique experience lets visitors explore the fascinating world of bees while enjoying local food and drinks.





KM 82: CLAY WALL, MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 40.543' W117° 38.340'

Here you will see an impressive clay wall, a natural display of vibrant colors and textures. The wall showcases a variety of clay types, from reds, greens, greys, browns, yellows and whites, each formed over thousands of years. It's a fascinating spot for anyone.



KM 82.8: MOUTH OF THE LITTLE SMOKY RIVER, MD OF SMOKY RIVER

GPS Coordinates: N55° 40.356' W117° 37.908'

Here you will find the confluence of the Little Smoky and the Smoky Rivers. This meeting area of the two waterways features a gravel beach, perfect for relaxing, skipping stones, or enjoying the view of the flowing rivers. A great spot for a stop.





KM 84: NATURAL SPRING, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 39.831' W117° 37.719'

Here you will find a natural spring where water flows directly from the riverbank into the river.

KM 93.5: BEACH, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 36.461' W117° 39.123'

Here is a beautiful sandy beach a great spot to spend the night or stop. There are private ATV trails down to this beach.



KM 94.5: BANK SWALLOW NEST, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 36.705' W117° 39.875'

Here, you will discover holes in the riverbank where Bank Swallows have built their nests. These remarkable birds migrate all the way to South

America each year, returning in the spring to raise their young and continue the cycle of life along the river.

KM 98: CLAY WALLS, BIRCH HILLS COUNTY

GPS Coordinates: N55° 37.014' W117° 42.481'

Here you will come across an impressive clay wall showcasing a stunning variety of colors and textures. From reds, browns, greens, yellows, greys and whites. A great spot to pause, take photos, and admire the unique patterns carved by time and nature.





View the
guide online:



Monitor
River Flow:



Mighty Peace Tourism hopes you found this river guide useful on your voyages, and hopefully it will inspire you to explore the Peace River during your future adventures.

Let's all work together to respect these rivers and surrounding areas by practicing responsible stewardship, ensuring they are kept pristine and well-maintained for future generations to enjoy.

