

## Central Parks

### Pembina Valley Provincial Park



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### Trail Closure Notification - Temporary closure of trail sections along Boulder Creek in Pembina Valley Provincial Park.

Due to slumping and wash-outs, the “Boulder Creek Trail”, on the east side of Boulder Creek is temporarily closed. The section of the “Pembina Rim Trail” from the junction of Hawks Hill trail in the south, to the picnic area along the Pembina River in the north, including the entire portion along the west side of Boulder Creek, is also closed, as is the section of the “Porcupine Ridges Trail” from the junction of “Hawks Hills Trail” to “Sunrise Point”. See map.

#### 1. Introduction



Thousands of years ago, the rushing waters of a glacial spillway, instead of forests of lush vegetation, would have greeted your visit to the Pembina valley.

Although the two landscapes seem radically different, it is the effects of glaciers, weather and time that have left the land looking as it does today. The valley is the notable landform of the area, measuring over two kilometres wide and 100 metres deep.

It inspired the name of the protected area that lies on the valley's edge-Pembina Valley Provincial Park. Located just off PR 201, south of Morden, the park is 1.8 km<sup>2</sup> (440 acres) in size. Its purpose is to preserve areas that are representative of the Pembina/Tiger Hills Natural Region of Manitoba, and accommodate nature-oriented recreational opportunities. The park will:

- Protect the representative features of the glacial spillway and river valley ecosystem, including deciduous forest and river habitats;
- Provide nature-oriented recreational opportunities such as hiking and wildlife viewing in a largely undisturbed environment; and
- Promote public appreciation and understanding of the park's natural features.



Hiking a wooded trail

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## Natural Features

As the continental glacier retreated northward, more than ten thousand years ago, its meltwaters formed glacial lakes. Lake Agassiz was the largest and most long-lived. In the area that is now known as Manitoba, several of these glacial lakes-Boissevain, Goodlands, Carroll, Souris, Hind and Brandon-formed in temporary basins along the edge of the retreating ice, while glacial ice filled the Lake Agassiz basin. The great volumes of meltwater carved spillways like the Pembina valley, into the Cretaceous shale that is between 65-145 million years old. Today, the Pembina

River flows in the floor of this spillway, draining water derived from springs, creeks and run-off from annual precipitation.

The park's boulder-filled creeks that drain into the Pembina River are bordered in places with cattails and willows, while the hills towering above the creek bed are covered with dense ridges of aspen and oak forest. Mixed and tall grass prairie plants like asters, harebells and meadow blazing stars can brighten the hiking trails. Summer winds are scented with the fragrances of wild bergamot and wild sage. Valley slopes provide chokecherries, saskatoons, wild raspberry and pincherries. One source attributes the origin of the word pembina to the Cree nepeminan, meaning high bush-cranberry; such cranberries are plentiful throughout the countryside, usually growing in wooded areas.



Prairie lilies

Variable amounts of rain, wind and sun create distinct habitats on the slopes of the Pembina Hills. Throughout the year, different types of food and shelter attract a variety of wildlife that have adapted to the landscape. In the summer, north-facing slopes provide animals with forest cover and lush vegetation. In winter the deep snow that accumulates on these slopes is used by snowshoe hares; they are able to run on top of the snow to escape their larger predators who are hindered by its depth. South-facing slopes are used more often by other wildlife in winter. Because they are warmer, there is easier access to food and protection from wind. Hibernating species, like ground squirrels, prefer to winter in these areas because winter conditions arrive late and spring conditions arrive early.

Birdwatchers have many delightful opportunities to see different types of birds throughout the year. The valley serves as a songbird auditorium, with the pleasant melodies of warblers, vireos and chickadees drifting back and forth. Red-tailed hawks, Swainson's hawks and golden eagles soar through the air, as the Windygates area west of the park is a popular migrating route for these birds. These raptors take advantage of the thermal updrafts of the valley. As the sun hits the valley slopes, the air warms and winds are created that enable the birds to soar through the air.

As for wildlife viewing, you might see hurried squirrels gathering acorns from bur oak trees, a red fox guarding her pups, or the occasional deer grazing in a meadow.



Red osier dogwood

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## **Conservation**

The creation of Pembina Valley Provincial Park in 2001 helped Manitoba expand its network of protected areas. Although relatively small in size, the park is still very important. It links the Pembina Valley Wildlife Management Area units and the Pembina Valley Camp. These three parcels of land combine to form one large habitat area for the wildlife and plants that live there. Because farmland and towns cover much of southern Manitoba, the value of these natural lands holds even greater significance.

This park had a unique beginning. Henry and Elma Martens, local landowners, wanted to preserve the area's natural values and provide opportunities for people to understand and appreciate the land. They thought that this could be best achieved through the establishment of a provincial park. Manitoba Conservation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada joined efforts to purchase the property. Hopefully, cooperation displayed between these partners will inspire other landowners to join in similar conservation efforts.



Hiking across a meadow

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## Things to See and Do

The park's hiking trails offer picturesque vantage points of the Pembina valley and surrounding countryside. They provide various levels of intensity, from challenging hikes to relaxing strolls. Picnic tables provide a place to rest and refuel for the next leg of your journey.

After your outing at the park, take time to visit other nearby sites that have contributed to the Pembina valley's cultural and natural heritage. The following short tour is one of many side trips that could be included with your visit.

Heading west from the park on PR 201, travel the scenic southern side of the Pembina valley to PR 242 at Snowflake. Approximately 4 km north of Snowflake you will be able to see Star Mound in the west. The mound is 2 km west of the highway and is rich in cultural history. It began with an Aboriginal campsite and sacred burial mounds. Star Mound museum housed in the area's first public school building, tells the stories of the area's first European settlers. Today, multitudes of crocuses with their warm, fine hairs, protect these spirits of the past from cold spring winds. The Snowflake area is also known for its large concentrations of snow geese during spring migration.

Continuing north to LaRivière, you'll find an outdoor amphitheatre carved into the east side of the valley. This unique amphitheatre is home to The Passion Play and Oak Valley Productions.

From here you can continue east on PTH 3 out of the valley 1.5 km then north 10 km to the Archibald Museum. It is home to several Nellie McClung houses and artifacts. The nearby town of Manitou was the home of Nellie McClung, temperance leader, MLA and author who, in 1916, led Manitoba women to become the first in Canada to win the right to vote.

Darlingford is next on the tour, travel east on PTH 3. The town's war memorial and park, a provincial heritage site, is a place to stop and reflect on those who gave their lives in the World Wars.

Finally, the Morden and District Museum located east of Darlingford in the town of Morden, is an important stop for natural history enthusiasts. Learn how the shale foundation of the park landscape developed in ancient seas, what types of marine reptiles lived in these waters, and where their fossils are still being found today.

The region offers many other year-round recreational opportunities, museums and a variety of special events. Please consult Travel Manitoba's Vacation Guide and their Events Guide for up-to-date information.



Wild columbine



Wolf willow or silverberry