

GoMedia **Canada** 2020

Saskatchewan

Deep in the Million Acre Woods: Prince Albert National Park

September 4-9, 2020

Theme

Discover a million-acre park, where vast prairies meet parkland and boreal forest. This is where free-roaming plains bison mingle among a diverse collection of wildlife that include timber wolves, elk, moose and bears. This is where over 200 recorded species of birds reside.

Description

"We must remember that in the end nature does not belong to us, we belong to it."

— **Grey Owl**

Saskatchewan invites you to discover what is at the heart of our province, Prince Albert National Park.

Since his celebrated books were penned, Grey Owl's wilderness playground has grown up. Waskesiu, a lakeside resort, is now a beehive of activity in the summer months. Campgrounds and resort accommodations now provide modern comforts to those who seek wilderness experiences without having to rough it.

Still, nature remains at the heart of why people come here and the park's reason for being has not been forgotten. Participants will explore on land and water, all that this beautiful national park has to offer, while also enjoying some of the creature comforts it offers. A trip to Grey Owl's cabin and final resting place is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. With over 150 kilometres of hiking trails, this is one of the best ways to discover the park's spectacular flora and fauna.

On our return to Saskatoon, we will dive into Indigenous history with a visit to Wanuskewin, a meeting place for Indigenous people for over 6000 years. You'll also have an opportunity to get up close and personal with one of Canada's few remaining populations of free ranging plains bison within their historic range. What are you waiting for? Come to Saskatchewan!

Considerations

- There will be limited internet access during the day as we will be in the wilderness, but full access in town or the resort.
- The Grey Owl tour is subject to weather as the lake we cross can be fickle. It's weather dependent or we may have to rearrange the schedule to accommodate. Participants must be flexible.
- Participants must be in decent physical condition for hiking, biking, possible water activities and ziplining.
- Please advise of any dietary restrictions in advance of the tour.
- A credit card will be taken at the hotel to cover any personal incidentals such as long distance calls, movies, laundry, etc.
- It is the responsibility of the media guest to ensure they have adequate travel and health insurance to cover participation in the trip.
- Tour will include one complimentary alcoholic beverage with each evening meal.
- Transfers to and from the airport are included.
- This tour is scent-free.

Itinerary

*NOTE: Media unable to arrive by 4 pm September 4th, should arrive September 3. Accommodation and meals will be provided by Tourism Saskatchewan along with recommendations for activities.

Day 1- Friday, September 4

Day	Arrive in Saskatoon.
4:00 pm	Drive to Prince Albert National Park (Drive time: 2 ½ hour) Check-in to Elk Ridge Resort , Saskatchewan's premier all season resort located in a luxurious setting in the heart of the boreal forest.
Evening	Welcome Dinner at Resort
Overnight	Elk Ridge Resort, Prince Albert National Park

Day 2- Saturday, September 5

Morning	Breakfast at the Resort
9:00 am	Boundary Bog Hike : Mystery of the Bog Enter the rarely-seen world of the black spruce fen with its carnivorous plants, dwarf birch and golden tamarack. A fen, like a bog, has peat deposits, but the water comes from small streams resulting in nutrient rich soil.
Morning	A morning hike (Approx 1 hour) A boardwalk allows one to step down into the heart of one of the many fens that dot the northern forest. Look for the red-green cup-shaped leaves of the pitcher plant. It lures, drowns and digests insects. The Knob and Kettle topography leads through mixed spruce and tamarack, taking you to the heart of a boreal forest bog.
12:00 pm	Lunch in MacKenzie's Dining Room at Hawood Inn . The restaurant is named for MacKenzie King, our Prince Albert born Canadian Prime Minister who allocated the area to be a National Park in 1928.
2:00 pm	Fat Tire Biking and exploring Waskesiu Lake townsite Waskesiu (which means red deer or elk in the Cree language) Lake, the only town inside the Park, is a hamlet resort town located on the eastern shore. We'll introduce you to fat bikes - similar to mountain bikes but with wider (or fatter!) tires, that you can ride almost anywhere.
6:30 pm	Dinner at Restaurant Pietro . Restaurant Pietro is locally owned by consummate hosts Gary and Garry, who treat you like family. This great little place is in the heart of Prince Albert National Park in the beautiful townsite of Waskesiu Lake. Enjoy outstanding food and an exceptional dining experience from the time you walk in the door to the last bite of dessert. Chef Evan Niekamp has created a menu of fresh homemade pasta dishes and hand-cut steaks served with locally sourced ingredients.
Overnight	Elk Ridge Resort, Prince Albert National Park

Day 3 - Sunday, September 6

Morning	Breakfast at Resort
7:30 am	Depart for Waskesiu Marinas for a guided motor boat tour to Grey Owl's cabin. Grey Owl was born in England in 1888 and moved to Canada where he became a trapper, writer, guide, conservationist, and lecturer. He eventually took on the name of Grey Owl and became an international legend.

- 8:00 am We'll make a pilgrimage to [Grey Owl's Cabin](#) with Natalie Matheson, Waskesiu Marina's resident expert on all things related to Grey Owl. Natalie won Canadian Tourism Employee of the Year in 2014, due in part to her dedication to this amazing tour.
- "Far enough away to gain seclusion, yet within reach of those whose genuine interest prompts them to make the trip, Beaver Lodge extends a welcome to you if your heart is right." - Grey Owl
- For information on the guided motor boat tour to Grey Owl's cabin click [here](#) and for more information on Grey Owl, click [here](#).
- 7:00 pm Dinner at Resort
- Overnight Elk Ridge Resort, Prince Albert National Park

Day 4 - Monday, September 7

- Morning Breakfast
- 9:00 am [Great Blue Heron Provincial Park](#) Tower Cabin Trail. A Saskatchewan Parks interpreter will join us for this six kilometre loop that brings us to a spectacular vista of the forest and lakes.
- Lunch We'll enjoy a picnic lunch at the top of the trail with spectacular views.
- 1:00 pm Optional activities: Canoeing, ziplining, stand up paddleboarding. This is weather dependent.
- 7:00 pm Cookout at Elk Ridge. Located by a pond adjacent to the resort, enjoy a campsite tradition - a weiner roast with S'mores for dessert.
- Overnight Elk Ridge Resort, Prince Albert National Park

Day 5 - Tuesday, September 8

- Morning Breakfast
- 9:00 am Depart for Saskatoon (Drive time: 2½ hours)
- 11:30 am Lunch at [Wanuskewin Heritage Park](#)
- We will meet Executive Chef Jenni Lessard, a Métis chef who grew up in a small cabin at Lamp Lake, just north of La Ronge. TV reception was poor so she spent much of her childhood playing in the boreal forest, picking berries and cooking. Jenni took this deep connection to food with her as she moved around exploring new places. People who attend Jenni's events are treated to her gift of storytelling and dedication to local ingredients that draw inspiration from Indigenous food systems as well as her own Métis heritage.
- 1:00 pm Tour of Wanuskewin Heritage Park
- Six thousand years ago, Wanuskewin echoed with the thundering hooves of bison and the voices of Indigenous peoples from across the Northern Plains. The land still echoes with these stories that Wanuskewin is proud to share - and the bison have returned. The nomadic tribes who roamed the Northern Plains gathered on this site of natural beauty where today visitors can relive the stories of a people who came here to hunt bison, gather food and herbs and escape the winter winds. Walk in their footsteps and you will understand why this site is a place of worship and celebration, of renewal with the natural world, and of a deep spirituality.
- Possible activities include a Medicine walk, tipi raising, bison viewing, archaeological dig tour, and Indigenous sports challenges.
- 5:00 pm Depart for hotel (Drive time: 10 minutes)
- Check into the [Delta Bessborough](#). One of Canada's grand railway hotels, "The Bess", known as the castle by the river, is surrounded by five acres of lush Elizabethan gardens overlooking the

South Saskatchewan River and provides a one-of-a-kind destination for your visit to downtown Saskatoon.

7:00 pm Farewell dinner at [Ayden Kitchen & Bar](#).
Internationally acclaimed Chef Dale Mackay grew up on the prairies and was the winner of the first Top Chef Canada. He and his team create homegrown and globally inspired comfort food, paired with wines and hand-crafted cocktails in a relaxed and inviting setting.

Overnight Delta Bessborough, Saskatoon

Day 6 - Wednesday, September 9

Morning Breakfast at Delta Bessborough

10:15 am Depart to airport

12:05 pm Depart Saskatoon to Victoria AC8737/AC8069. Arrives in Victoria at 2:35 pm (one stop)

Recommended items to bring

- Please note, we will provide a kit with sunscreen, insect repellent, snacks, beverages and other comfort items. We hope we'll have good weather but be prepared for inclement weather. You may wish to consider bringing along the following articles:
- Sunscreen – if you have a preference for a certain variety.
- Hat and sunglasses.
- Clothes that can get wet for canoeing.
- Comfortable walking/hiking shoes.
- Comfortable clothes for daily activity and touring – layers are a good idea.
- Hooded jacket or hoodie.
- Rain jacket.
- Bathing suit and towel (for optional activities like stand up paddleboarding)
- Casual clothes and shoes for evening dinners and outings.
- Small umbrella, if you have one.

** Please be aware that this trip is scent-free. Please do NOT wear any scented lotions, perfumes, etc. **