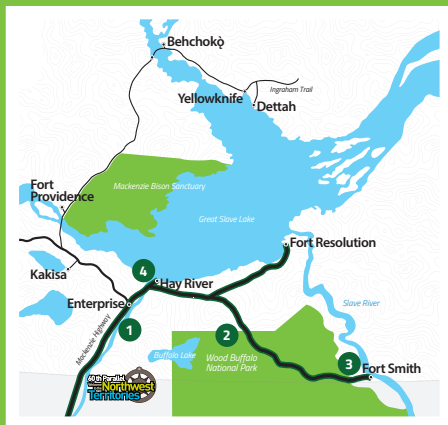


# WATERFALLS, BEACHES, SALT PLAINS AND MORE



## Come hike the South Slave region's spectacular nature trails.

Stroll along Great Slave Lake's best beach. Hike between two epic waterfalls. Follow the tracks of great beasts on surreal salt plains. Take in a panoramic view of world-class, whitewater rapids.

Whether you're in the towns of Hay River or Fort Smith, or spending some time in Wood Buffalo National Park or Twin Gorge Territorial Park, the South Slave Region of the Northwest Territories is home to scenic and rewarding hiking trails that will delight both the casual nature lover and the avid outdoorsperson.



ALEXANDRA FALLS - HANS PRAEF / NWTT

### 1. TWIN FALLS GORGE TERRITORIAL PARK

#### The Twin Falls Trail (2 km, easy):

This is the ideal day-trip from Hay River. Just 40 kilometres from town, marvel at the Hay River as it plunges more than 30 metres over Alexandra Falls. Then begin a short walk over a clearly marked, forested path to Louise Falls, downriver. Learn all about the area's history, culture and geology from interpretive signs that accompany the trail, which winds along the gorge. Be sure to take a lot of photos of three-tiered Louise Falls from the viewing platform.

### 2. WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

#### Karstland Loop (0.8 km, easy):

Starting at the Salt River Day-Use area on Pine Lake Road, just 24 kilometres from Fort Smith, take this short loop to see sinkholes, unique karst topography and the odd red-sided garter snake.

#### Benchmark Creek Trail (8 km one-way, moderate):

Take a few hours for this one! Start along the Salt River, stopping to smell the wildflowers growing in the meadows, before arriving at otherworldly Grosbeak Lake. This moonscape is dotted with glacial erratics—rocks left by glaciers eons ago. Follow tracks left by wildlife in crystalized salt flats, which are holdovers of an ancient seabed.

#### Salt Pan Lake Trail (7 km one-way, moderate):

Hike through boreal forest and past karst formations, starting at the Salt River Day-Use area, until you climb an escarpment for a scenic view of your surroundings. Here, you'll witness a number of sinkholes and Salt Pan Lake. Make sure you look for fossil-bearing rocks along the way.

#### Salt Plains Access (350m, moderate):

At the Salt Plains Viewpoint, at the end of a turnoff from Highway #5, a switchback trail leads you to the sprawling salt plains. Salt abounds! Explore salt mounts and saline springs on this surreal landscape, or follow a set of bison tracks wherever they may lead you.



SALT PLAINS - PIERRE CHAILION / NWTT





SLAVE RIVER RAPIDS - PIERRE CHAILLON / NWTT



HAY RIVER TERRITORIAL PARK - COLIN FIELD / NWTT



Scan here  
for a map of  
walking trails  
in Fort Smith.

### 3. FORT SMITH

**TransCanada Trail:** On the south bank of the Slave River, the TransCanada Trail connects Fort Fitzgerald to downtown Fort Smith, providing a jumping-off point for the trails listed below.

**Pelican Rapids Trail:** This trail brings nature lovers through mature jackpine stands and rewards them with a picturesque view of Pelican Rapids—the largest set of rapids on the Slave River.

**Fitzgerald Loop:** Roughly 20 kilometres south of Fort Smith, this trail lets hikers explore historic Fort Fitzgerald, the start of the famed and vital portage route that permitted the movement of goods from Alberta into the Northwest Territories.

**Mountain Portage Loop:** This scenic trail provides a stunning view of the Slave River rapids, along with the American White Pelican Nesting Sanctuary. Bring your binoculars and your bathing suit, as this trail passes sandy beaches.

**Rapids of the Drowned:** Looking for a close up view of the American White Pelican? This is the spot! The Rapids of the Drowned are the most visible rapids in Fort Smith and are just a short hike from the main Thebacha Trail. These rapids are a designated Historic Site of Canada and a must-see spot in Fort Smith.

**Thebacha Trail:** This multi-use trail brings you through the Town of Fort Smith, winding through downtown from the Queen Elizabeth Campground to Axe Handle Hill.

For more information,  
visit [www.fortsmith.ca/visitors](http://www.fortsmith.ca/visitors).



Scan here  
for a map of  
walking trails  
in Hay River.

### 4. HAY RIVER

**The Great Trail:** Formally known as the Trans Canada Trail, this stretch of trail runs from the outskirts of Hay River, through downtown, along the banks of the town's namesake river, through Vale Island and on to the sandy beach on the south shore of Great Slave Lake.

**Rotary Trail:** This easily accessible path follows the edge of the river providing scenic views, rest stops and interpretive signage along the way. This trail is popular with residents and visitors looking for a relaxing hike surrounded by nature right in the heart of downtown. Bring your camera and capture some of the wildlife along the trail and river.

**Old Town Connector Trail:** Explore Hay River's history as the transportation hub of the NWT. Walking the trail, you will catch a glimpse of Buffalo Airways' WWII era DC-4 and DC-3 aircraft at the Merlyn Carter Airport. You will also cross the most northern continental rail head in North America, watch tug boats, loaded barges and Canadian Coast Guard ships heading out from the Port of Hay River to supply communities along the Mackenzie River and ply the Arctic Coast during the summer months.

**Oxbow Trail:** The Old Town Connector Trail joins the Oxbow Trail head and follows the snye across Vale Island. This challenging trail is populated with birds, animals and a wide variety of plant life. Interpretive signage and rest areas along the trail allow time to watch the wildlife and learn about the verdant alluvial island and its inhabitants.

**Hay River Territorial Park Trail:** The Territorial Park beach is beautifully groomed and a preferred swimming location for both locals and visitors. The area is complete with playground equipment, day-use cabin, a wooden boardwalk and interpretive signage along the beach to the park. Stroll along the beach, sunbathe, swim, or watch the pelicans, gulls and eagles play in the spray of Great Slave Lake.

For more information,  
visit [www.hayriver.com/tourism](http://www.hayriver.com/tourism)