

THE SOUTH BOUNDARY TRAIL

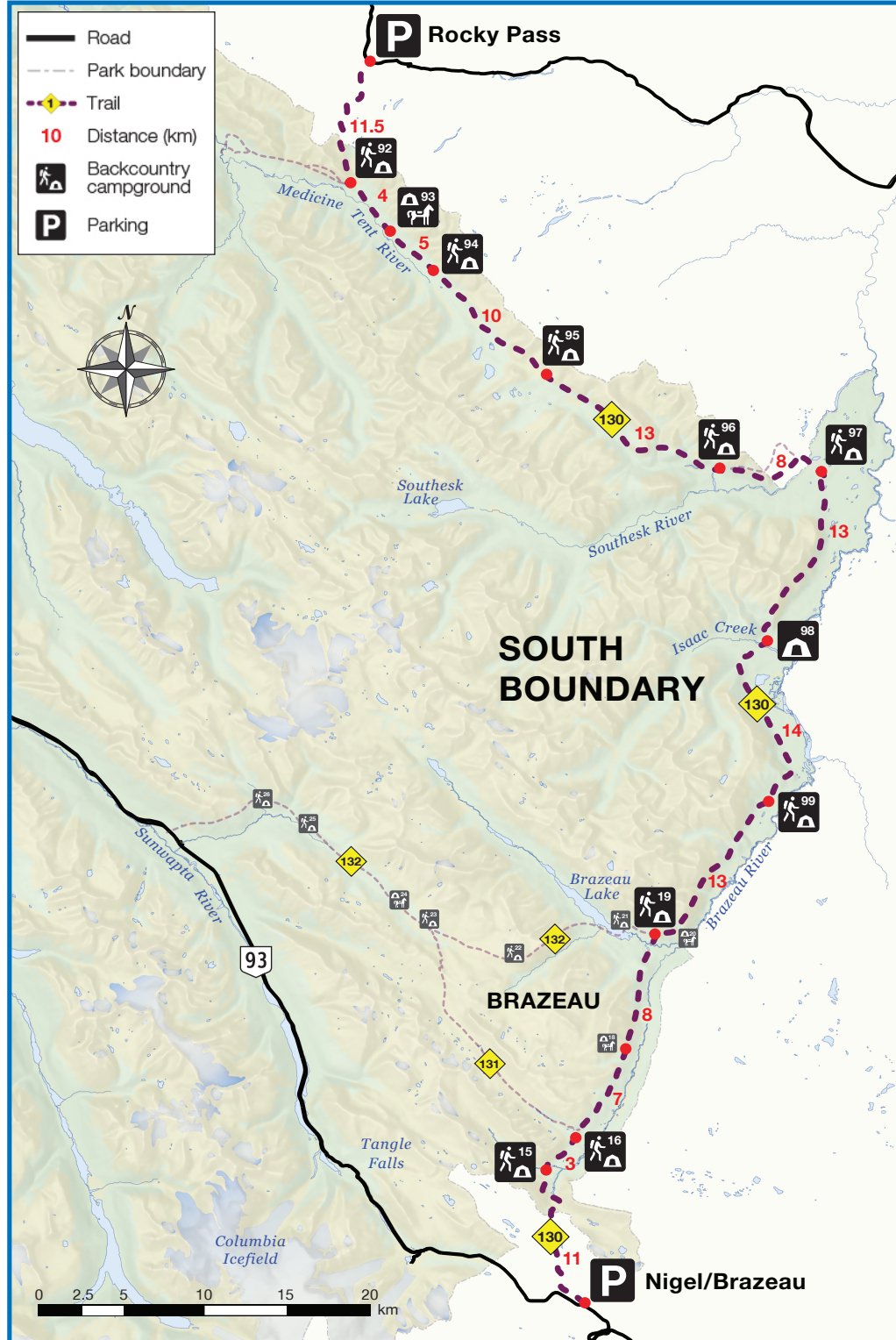
A remote, long-distance trip for experienced backpackers.

-  Maintained trail, low priority
-  121 km one way
-  7 – 10 days
-  Dogs permitted
-  Horses permitted
-  No bikes

Is this trail for you?

The South Boundary is a remote wilderness route, recommended for users with significant backcountry skills and experience. The trail may be overgrown and difficult to find in places; expect route finding. Most creeks and rivers are not bridged. Fords can be dangerous. Rivers can be impassable during times of high water.

Highlights include the open views of Cairn Pass and Rocky (Cardinal) Pass, glacial fed rivers and solitude.



The details

Starting at the Nigel Creek trailhead. The trail ascends to Nigel Pass to cross near the headwaters of the Brazeau River. Follow the Brazeau River past Wolverine South Horse Campground (#18) to a junction near the Brazeau River Campground (#19). This first section of trail is part of the popular and maintained Brazeau Loop.

On the South Boundary trail, continue up valley to come to Arête (#99) and then Isaac Creek (#98) campgrounds. There are unbridged river crossings that may not be crossable at high water. Shortly after Southesk Campground (#97) the hiker trail crosses the Southesk River and the national park boundary on a suspension bridge. It travels outside of the park for 1.5 km before it rejoins the main trail on the north side of the river. Follow the Southesk and Cairn river valleys up to the open alpine meadows of Cairn Pass. Descend the Medicine Tent River to the junction with the Rocky Pass Trail. After crossing Rocky Pass, this trail descends to the Cardinal River. This section of trail before and after fording the river can require route finding. The trail head is just over 4 km from the river. This trail can be hiked late into the season (early October).



- Watch for hiker bypass trails that split from the main horse trail at some of the river crossings. Specifically, below Four Point Campground, downstream of Arête Campground and in the Southesk area.
- Watch for re-routes and associated trail markers in areas where bridges and trails have washed out, especially between Brazeau River Campground and Cairn Pass.
- Travel is not recommended during times of high water.
- Fires are permitted only in designated fire pits.
- The distance between trailheads by road is approximately 300 km. Plan transportation.
- The names Cardinal Pass and Rocky Pass are both often used for the same pass. Cardinal Pass appears on topographical maps.
- The Brazeau and Poboktan portions of this trail are closed for caribou from Nov. 1 to May 15.



ARE YOU PREPARED?

Safety is your responsibility.

Refer to the [Jasper National Park Backcountry Planning Guide](#):

- Descriptions of trail types and campground facilities;
- Equipment checklists;
- Responsible camping;
- Safety information.

Before heading out, check trail, weather and road conditions:

parkscanada.gc.ca/jaspertrails

MAPS

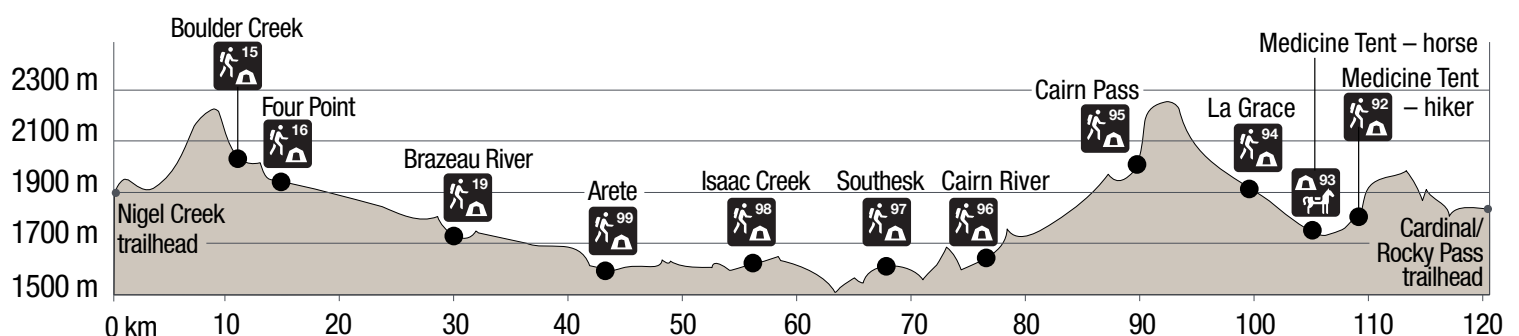
1:50,000: Medicine Lake 83C/13
Mountain Park 83C/14
Southesk Lake 83C/11
George Creek 83C/10
Job Creek 83C/7
Sunwapta Peak 83C/6
Columbia Icefield 83C/3

National Geographic: Jasper South

PERMIT


A backcountry camping permit is mandatory for all overnight trips and can be obtained online at reservations.pc.gc.ca or by calling 1-877-737-3783.

Elevation profile





Note: Alternative Trailhead

 **Bridge near Brazeau Lake is out.** Repair scheduled for fall 2025.









Hikers may also access the South Boundary trail via the Poboktan Creek Trailhead on Highway 93. This option travels along Poboktan Creek, over Poboktan Pass and past Brazeau Lake. It joins the trail described above 2.6 km east of Brazeau Lake. The total trip distance is 116 km and takes 7 – 10 days.

See [Poboktan Trail Backcountry Guide](#) for details.















History

The South Boundary Trail historically ran from Nigel Pass trailhead in the south to Beaver Lake in the north. A wildfire in 2003 and high water events have impacted the trail from Climax Creek to Jacques Lake. This section is impassable due to fallen trees, new growth, and trail damage due to slumping. Also, there is no bridge over the Rocky River north of Climax Creek. The trail is now shorter and the northern trailhead is outside of the national park over Rocky Pass.

Campground Information

Campground	Elevation (m)	Description	# of sites	Toilet Type	Food Storage	UTM
15 Boulder Creek  	2036 m	This campground has pretty views and is located close to the Brazeau River.	4	Throne	Lockers	11U 492962-5790100
16 Four Point  	1935 m	A forested campground close to the Brazeau River with nice views. The junction for Jonas Shoulder is just after this campground.	8	Throne	Lockers	11U 494770-5792240
19 Brazeau River  	1737 m	A rustic forested campground close to the Brazeau River.	4	Throne	Lockers	11U 499608-5804813
99 Arete  	1647 m	A simple camping area in the forest high on a bank above the Brazeau River.	4	Bar	Pole	11U 506649-5813317



Campground	Elevation (m)	Description	# of sites	Toilet Type	Food Storage	UTM
98 Isaac Creek 	1605 m	A simple camping area in a small meadow with some mountain views.	4	Throne	Lockers	11U 506581 - 5823234
97 Southesk  	1590 m	A pretty camping area on the shore of a small lake with mountain views.	4	Bar	Pole	11U 509593 - 5833803
96 Cairn River  	1673 m	A beautiful camping area on the shore of the Cairn River with mountain views.	4	Bar	Pole	11U 502779 - 5834066
95 Cairn Pass 	2074 m	A pretty camping area on the edge of a meadow with mountain views.	4	Throne	Pole	11U 493151 - 5839715
94 La Grace  	1940 m	A simple camping area on the edge of a meadow with some mountain views.	4	Bar	Pole	11U 486511 - 5846015
93 Medicine Tent – Horse   	1773 m	A simple horse camping area across the Medicine Tent River from the main trail.	4	Bar	None	11U 482937 - 5849194
92 Medicine Tent – Hiker   	1721 m	A small camping area in the forest on the shore of the Medicine Tent River.	4	Bar	Pole	11U 480791 - 5851834

HOW TO GET THERE

Rocky Pass

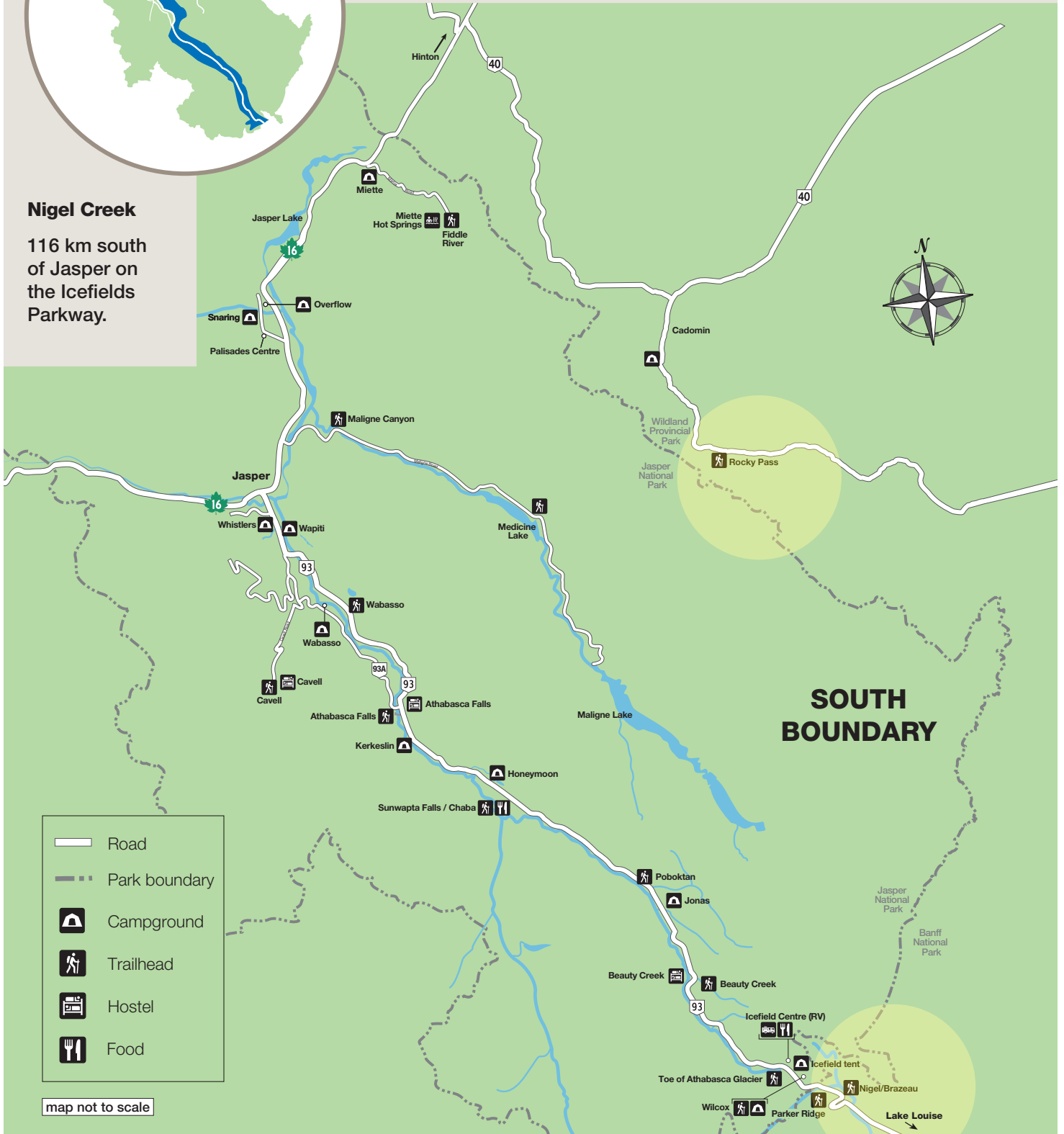
This trailhead is located outside of Jasper National Park on Forestry Trunk Road 734. Total one-way distance is approximately 150 km with the last third on gravel road.

- Take Highway 16 North from Jasper toward Hinton.
- Just before Hinton, turn south onto Highway 40. Continue through the hamlet of Cadomin.
- Ascend to the summit of Cardinal Divide and down 1.7 km on the other side to the trailhead parking lot on the west side of the road.



Nigel Creek

116 km south of Jasper on the Icefields Parkway.



	Road
	Park boundary
	Campground
	Trailhead
	Hostel
	Food

map not to scale